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AUTHOR Channon, Anne
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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the perceptions and commercial problems of craftspeople in the South West region of England and suggested some solutions. Questionnaires were sent to 600 identified enterprises and craftspeople. From the 51 percent who responded, 50 sites were chosen for semistructured interviews. The perspectives of agencies and buyers working with craftspeople were also gathered. Interview results were used to develop and implement four marketing workshops. The study showed that there is an urgent need for training in marketing skills for craftspeople, but there are ideological barriers for many that make existing curriculum material inappropriate and direct practical application more acceptable. The study suggested that colleges and other institutions should design and implement education and training programs relevant to those needs. Open and distance learning should also be considered as options, together with the feasibility of regional databases for craftspeople, offering resources for specific information requests, including business opportunities. (Following a description of the study, the bulk of this report consists of quotations from the craftspeople, agencies, and buyers; reactions to the workshops; the questionnaire; and materials related to the workshop.) (KC)

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MARKETING SKILLS FOR CRAFTSPEOPLE

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PICKUP Regional Development Agents

London
Celia Jones
Room 3/72
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
London SE1 7PH. Tel: 01-934 9429

Eastern Counties
Tony Haymer
PICKUP Office
Cambridgeshire College of Arts
and Technology
East Road
Cambridge CB1 1PT. Tel: 0223 352900

East Midlands
Roy Frost
PICKUP Office
Robins Wood House
Robins Wood Road
Aspley
Nottingham NG8 3NH
Tel: 0602 298298

Thames Valley and North West London
David Thomas
PICKUP Office
Oxford Polytechnic
Headington
Oxford OX3 OBP
Tel: 0865 60264

North East and Cumbria
David Carter
PICKUP Office
Northern Council for Further Education
5 Grosvenor Villas
Grosvenor Road
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2RU
Tel: 091 272 4884

North West
Heather Hughes Jones
PICKUP Office
Woodlands Centre
Southport Road
Chorley PR7 1QR. Tel: 02572 75474

South East
Don Jarvis
PICKUP Office
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Egham Hill
Surrey TW20 0EX
Tel: 0784 34455

South West
David Roskilly
PICKUP Office
Bristol Polytechnic
Coldharbour Lane
Frenchay
Bristol BS16 1QY. Tel: 0272 659075

West Midlands
Paul Tranter
PICKUP Office
Wolverhampton Polytechnic
Compton Park Site
Compton Road West
Wolverhampton WV5 9DX
Tel: 0902 714771

Yorkshire and Humberside
George Ingle
PICKUP Office
YHAFHE, Bowling Green Terrace
Leeds LS11 9SX. Tel: 0532 438634

Wales
Ian Roffe
PICKUP Office
Polytechnic of Wales
Pontypridd
Mid Glamorgan CF37 1DL
Tel: 0443 493696

FEU / PICKUP

PROJECT REPORT

MARKETING SKILLS FOR CRAFTSPEOPLE

Anne Channon

Further Education Unit

Professional Industrial and Commercial Updating

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FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

Elizabeth House York Road London SE1 7PH Telephone 01-934 9000

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Dear Sir/Madam,

MARKETING SKILLS FOR CRAFTSPEOPLE

The attached document researches the perceptions and commercial problems of craftspeople in the South West region of England, and suggests some solutions. The researcher, Anne Channon, then of Bristol Polytechnic, was asked to focus on the marketing skills of craftspeople. She records their needs against specific marketing principles and concepts, their reactions to marketing workshops run for them by Bristol Polytechnic Business Studies Department, logs the views of craft agencies and buyers, and makes recommendations for future action which apply well beyond the South West.

The result is an enlightening study of the craft industry and the people for whom their artistry is not only a means of survival, but also a deliberate lifestyle, where quality of life and rural living are often given precedence over monetary goals.

The report shows that there is an urgent need for training in marketing skills for craftspeople, but there are ideological barriers for many which make existing curriculum material inappropriate, and direct practical application more acceptable. There is scope here for institutions of further, higher and adult education to assume a distinctive role. Much of the needs analysis is provided in this report, and it is now for colleges and others to design and implement education and training programmes, with the sensitivity and relevance this report demands.

Open and distance learning should also be given careful consideration as options, together with the feasibility of regional databases for craftspeople, offering resources for specific information requests, including business opportunities.

This report is recommended to you as a resource document which might usefully be read in conjunction with other FEU work on curriculum development for self-employment and small businesses.* Copies of a summary bulletin are generally available but, in the meantime, this document is another reminder that the FHE and Adult system has its own marketing to do if it is to relate more effectively to the needs of the community.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

* *Entrepreneurial Skills: A Curriculum Framework for Self-Employment in Very Small Businesses* (FEU, 1987)

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Finally my thanks go to the many craftspeople who gave so generously of their time and without whom this research would not have been possible.

Anne Channon

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

1. The Crafts Council has estimated that there are approximately 3,300 craftspeople working in the South West, while other sources regard this figure as an underestimate. Whatever the true position, the crafts provide an important sector of business activity in the South West region and have a role to play in the development of national design capability.

2. Traditionally, craftspeople receive no business training and little attention has been paid so far to this area of the small business sector. The Business Studies Department of Bristol Polytechnic, with funding from the Further Education Unit and PICKUP, set up a research project to explore the business learning needs of craftspeople in the South West and make recommendations on future training possibilities. The research findings and subsequent recommendations are the subject of this report.

Research objectives

3. The first objective of the study was to identify the learning needs of craftspeople in the South West. This needs analysis was to be directed at those who were engaged full-time as proprietors or partners in small craft businesses.

4. Secondly, by assessing the gaps in business knowledge, with particular reference to aspects of marketing, it was hoped to develop a curriculum of business and marketing skills relevant to craftspeople's needs.

5. The third major objective was to identify the channels through which these learning needs might be met in the South West. Initial research had indicated a possible resistance to the acquisition of such skills by craftspeople.

Methodology and sample

6. It was specified in the FEU project brief, that there was to be a 'needs analysis'. This involved two separate stages of research. The first was the identification and selection of a number of small craft businesses operating across the range of major crafts within the area of the South West. The second involved the carrying out of a number of semi-structured interviews with the proprietors of these businesses, so that data could be collected about current and past problems that they had encountered, their current strategies for problem solving, their attitudes towards business education and details of any training that they had undertaken in business and marketing skills. Small businesses selected for interview were to have been in operation for at least one year.

7. No readily available information source could be located which gave listings of small craft businesses in the South West. Therefore a number of organisations and associations which had an interest or link with professional craftspeople and small craft businesses were contacted and a list of possible interviewees compiled. (See Appendix 1 for a list of such organisations.)

Stage A

8. The lists available were unfortunately inconsistent in the information offered. It was therefore agreed by the Project Steering Committee that an additional stage be introduced into the research. This involved the mailing of postal questionnaires to 600 identified enterprises/professional craftspeople, to elicit information on craft type, geographical location, period of trading, training background and a number of other factors which would make the selection of an interview sample more specific.

9. There was a good response rate to the postal questionnaire (51%). The results were tabulated and interviewees selected according to a number of criteria, including geographical location, craft type, length of time in business, training background and number of employees.

10. A Steering Committee meeting which included representatives from colleges of art and design, craft associations, FEU and PICKUP, and project workers served to establish areas of interest to be investigated and developed in the interview stage. It was these interviews that produced the material for the needs analysis.

Stage B

11. Semi-structured interviews, each lasting approximately one hour, were conducted by the project leader and project workers, where possible at the place of work. This helped the interviewer to appreciate the working context of each interviewee and a large percentage of questionnaire respondents were willing to accommodate this.

Participating craftspeople

12. The final choice of interviewees was intended to represent a cross-section of craft type, county location, generic location

Alan Peters, furniture designer and maker

(town, tourist centre, rural, etc.), time in business, training experience, age of proprietor(s), number of employees, and to reflect a range of craft skills and employment backgrounds (see Appendix 2). In the sense that all came from positive responses to postal questionnaires, they constituted a self-selected group.

13. A target of 50 interviews was set, distributed by county and by type of craft, and weighted by using the regional breakdown for the South West given in the *Working in Crafts* report (Crafts Council, 1983). Within these categories, respondents were chosen to represent as many of the various criteria as possible, and illustrate a wide variety of experience.

Interview breakdown by craft and county

	DEVON	GLOS.	AVON	CORNWALL	SOMERSET	DORSET	TOTALS by craft
POTTERY/CERAMICS	3	4	1	2	2	1	13
TEXTILES	3	2	3	1	1	–	10
WOOD	4	2	1	1	–	1	9
TOYS/MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS	1	–	2	1	1	1	6
SILVER/JEWELLERY	1	–	1	1	1	1	5
LEATHER	–	1	1	1	–	–	3
GLASS	–	–	1	1	–	–	2
GRAPHIC	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
RURAL	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
TOTALS BY COUNTY	12	11	10	8	5	4	50

N.B. A more detailed breakdown of sample characteristics is available. Please contact researcher for details.

Fieldwork

14. Interviews took place between October and December 1985 and were conducted at the respondent's place of work except in two instances in Cornwall, where travel and cost considerations made alternative venues necessary. A copy of the postal questionnaire used and a list of topics probed in interviews can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

15. Interviewers were briefed to use a series of standard questions around which broad discussions could develop on the areas of art/craft/design training, business training, and how decisions were made on product range, pricing, promotion, and distribution of work. The interviews were deliberately informally structured in order to encourage the makers and proprietors to articulate their attitudes to their craft and its commercial context.

Analysis and testing

Analysis of interviews

16. After the completion of the interviews an analysis of the findings was made. Some interviews produced specific points of interest while all contributed to the wider picture from which a number of conclusions and hypotheses have been drawn, illustrated in the following pages with verbatim comments. In this way a number of major problem areas are identified.

17. The results of this process in turn formed the basis for a series of workshops entitled 'Marketing Skills and Craftspeople', which represented the final stage of the project and gave an opportunity for the testing of some existing marketing curriculum material.

Rod Ward, violin, viola and cello maker

Testing of curriculum material

18. All those craft businesses who had replied to the postal questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed at a later stage if necessary (almost 200 in total), were contacted by post and offered the chance to take part in one of four marketing workshops for craftspeople. These were held in April 1986 at four centres: Plymouth, Ilminster, Cheltenham and Bristol. (Copies of the course brochure and the study programme can be found in Appendix 5.)

19. It was at these sessions that some marketing curriculum material was tested, and craftspeople asked for their comments and reactions. A response sheet for appraisal of the marketing workshop sessions was given to each person attending (see Appendix 6). The resulting comments are analysed in Chapter 9.

2. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

20. Many colleges of FE and HE in the South West offer courses for starting up and running a small business, but no courses are offered that cater specifically for craftspeople.

21. 'Crafts' as a term has a myriad of meanings amongst craft organisations, makers, retail outlets and purchasers. This confusion makes the marketing and pricing of craftwork particularly difficult.

Interview findings

22. A majority of those interviewed had started craft businesses following a previous art, design or craft training. Others had switched from a previous unrelated career, citing a desire for autonomy as the reason for career change. Only a negligible number claimed to have had any formal training in business or management skills. Small craft business proprietors faced all the difficulties of running a small business, but had the additional problem of also being sole maker in many instances.

23. The majority of interviewees regarded decisions on pricing, product range, promotion, sales outlets and product distribution as discrete problems without understanding their interdependence. This was often compounded by a lack of medium- or long-term financial planning, a lack of marketing information and inability to define the 'product' and the 'market' sufficiently.

24. Key problems identified in interviews included :

- isolation;
- lack of previous training in business and marketing skills;
- finding start-up finance and raising capital for necessary equipment;
- low turnover and income and long working hours;
- cashflow;
- lack of assistance from official bodies;
- lack of business and marketing expertise identified amongst craft guilds and associations;
- irregular supply and inconsistency of raw materials and the inability to bulk buy from suppliers;
- product range: many had limited product ranges. A few offered a wide range of products as a buffer against fluctuations in consumer preferences. Some chose a dual system of 'bread and butter' lines and 'one-offs'. The preference for the majority was to work in 'one-offs';

- production ceilings: the norm of one- or two-person businesses meant that production capability was limited. Unexpected increases in demand were not readily accommodated. Striking exceptions were those crafts where outworkers were employed;

- employees: a quarter of those interviewed employed assistants, often YTS placements and two used the FACE sponsorship scheme. However, three-quarters preferred to work alone or as two-person businesses;

- business expansion: attitudes to future expansion varied. In a number of cases, conscious decisions were made to limit business size in terms of employees. The usual reason given was the desire to continue making rather than to become purely a business manager;

- pricing;

- being both maker and salesperson;

- selling;

- finding suitable retail outlets;

- trade fair participation: a minority thought that attendance at prestigious trade fairs was an ultimate goal and would lead to large orders;

- sale or return: the SOR system prevalent in galleries was disliked by all, but many newcomers felt it was inescapable until they had gained a reputation;

- mail order for craft: this was suggested as a possible future option but attitudes were mixed. Many felt the necessity of holding large stocks against orders was antithetical to a craft ethos;

- exporting;

- affording promotional and advertising material: in general the quantity and quality of promotional material found was low, although most felt that such material was necessary for advancement of the business;

- design education: many regarded the public as ill-informed about craft products and linked this to the unwillingness of customers to pay realistic prices for craft work;

- craft ideology: autonomy, creativity and the pursuit of technical excellence figured high in discussions of craft ideology;

- artistic versus commercial considerations: there was evidence of a clash between artistic and commercial principles for many of those interviewed. For the artist-

craftsman/woman, work was generally regarded as an item first imagined, then executed, then sold. Commercial viability was often judged secondary to aesthetic considerations;

- marketing awareness: a minority felt a growing need for, and interest in, marketing skills. A handful had used the services of professional public relations consultants.

The agencies' perspective

25. Agencies working with craftspeople in the South West all recognised the need for marketing skills amongst small craft businesses, but in most instances limited resources made large-scale help difficult. The Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA), however, is active in helping to promote small numbers of crafts businesses through the medium of trade fairs. The Crafts Council offers a range of relevant publications, publishes lists of trade fairs and exhibitions and runs a series of touring marketing workshops. Other organisations in the South West offer marketing and business advice.

The buyers' perspective

26. Craft shops and craft gallery proprietors made a number of criticisms regarding the professionalism of craftspeople. These included:

- lack of adequate product information
- lack of firm delivery dates
- lack of consistency in products
- price changes without prior notice
- incomplete orders
- late deliveries
- general unreliability
- lack of professional image

The marketing gap

27. A considerable gap exists between existing levels of marketing skills and those possible using the benefits of training. The areas of particular weakness were identifying and meeting customer demand, pricing, promotion and distribution. In addition, a low level of general small business skills was identified.

The marketing workshops

28. Workshop participants included both interviewees and other professional craftspeople working in the South West. Most participants considered the curriculum material tested to be relevant to their businesses. The session on pricing policy was seen as immediately relevant, but those on 'What do people buy?' and 'Where does business take place?' were seen as less so. This underlined the product-oriented approach and the avid concentration on making, to the virtual exclusion of other considerations.

29. The experience of the workshops reinforced the preceding research findings, that many basic marketing concepts are misunderstood. Marketing was perceived by most as selling and not as a decision-making process requiring systematic consideration of the basic elements of marketing; those of product, price, distribution and promotional decisions.

30. Clearly, there is an urgent need for training in marketing skills for craftspeople, but there are ideological barriers for many which make existing curriculum material inappropriate. The content of such basic courses should not be difficult for colleges of FE and HE to provide, but the form of the sessions would need careful and sensitive handling along with a strong emphasis on relevance and direct practical application.

The Dean Heritage Centre — a craft complex

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

31. From the interview and workshop findings it is apparent that there is an urgent need for craftspeople to market their work more successfully and to run their businesses more efficiently. Although craft businesses are necessarily involved in various marketing activities, these tend to be seen as isolated activities and there is, in general, a lack of systematic collection of data, regular analysis and marketing planning. The need for training in marketing skills is apparent. It is equally evident that there are a number of potential barriers to the acquisition of such skills.

Educational provision

32. At the beginning of the research all institutions of further and higher education in the South West region were contacted by letter and asked to give details of any courses on offer which provided training in marketing for craftspeople. From the response received, it was apparent that:

i) Many institutions offer general courses on starting up and running small businesses.

ii) None appear to cater specifically for small craft businesses.

iii) Most courses for art and design students do incorporate some element of small business practice.

33. What was evidently missing was a marketing course specifically targeted at small craft businesses. Of the colleges who replied, a number would appear to welcome the opportunity of developing courses of this kind.

The diversity of the market for such a course

34. There appear to be at least three distinct groups of craftspeople:

- There are those who have rejected a previous career in industry or commerce and who have chosen to work independently and value their autonomy highly.
- There are those who have entered craft through a conventional art and design training and who, in general, value artistic development above commercial expediency, often rejecting the 'business ethic' as antithetical to artistic creativity.
- Lastly there are those who have elected to run a small business and see a craft business as one possibility, often as the development of a hobby or leisure pursuit.

35. It will, therefore, be difficult to provide a single training course to meet such diversity of interest and motivation. While there are a large number of craft enterprises in the South West, it is clear that a substantial proportion of these would be unwilling to follow a conventional introductory marketing course, as for

instance offered in the business studies department of a college of further or higher education.

36. It is suggested, therefore, that a more specific course should be designed which, while introducing the various elements of marketing as a concept, should be as free as possible of business terminology and sensitive to craftspeople's interests by taking a practical and non-theoretical stance.

37. For those who reject a conventional training approach, the alternative is to consider the provision of some form of independent learning package or to encourage self-help by the provision of a regional information centre.

Finance

38. It is important to emphasise that, although the research findings identified a definable and specific area of educational need, the problems are not easily remedied. The area of 'craft' is one where it is unlikely that this need could be met, certainly in the short term, without some form of public funding mechanism. It is considered that the problems are unlikely to be solved without some multi-agency discussion and agreement on future action.

Training

39. Recommendations for possible future action include, particularly, the development of an introductory short course in marketing skills for craftspeople. This would have to take into account:

- the need for a practical emphasis
- limited resources available for fees
- the limited time available as many work as one-person businesses.

40. Such a course would probably be of most value to those in the first few years of their business but it would also have a more general application. In addition, if craftspeople came to see such a course as highly relevant to their particular problems, this would undoubtedly encourage attendance.

41. Consideration of the following factors should promote success:

- A case-study approach where marketing principles are drawn out by participatory discussion of the problems of real craft businesses will probably be most effective.
- The participation of commercially successful craftspeople as tutors will possibly serve to overcome potential barriers to 'business ethos'.
- Stress on how such a course can help with future time management will probably generate an enthusiastic response.

42. Such an introductory course could be backed up with later sessions where craftspeople returned for one-day workshops to discuss the relevance of these marketing principles to their own specific business context.

43. It is also apparent from the research that the problems of those working in production-ware are vastly different from those dealing with one-offs and commissioned work. It may be necessary to consider the provision of separate courses to cater for this latter group if demand is sufficient, or to provide a general but flexible modular course which could accommodate its specific needs.

Distance learning

44. As a means of overcoming the isolation and scattered rural location of many craft workshops, the development of a distance learning course on marketing for craftspeople could be considered. It would offer to craftspeople a flexible study pattern and independent learning methods.

Bill Burton, maker of wooden mobiles, Dean Heritage Centre

45. Its drawbacks include the cost of providing high quality back-up material such as audio cassettes, and the lack of group learning dynamics which could serve only to reinforce the present problems of isolation. In addition, there would be the problem of whether craftspeople have sufficient time available for a continuous learning package.

46. It is unlikely that the commercial market place could provide consultancy as the expense for craftspeople would be prohibitive. If some form of public provision were deemed possible, then perhaps marketing consultancy could be made available using the appropriate expertise of colleges of further and higher education, and polytechnics. This could be promoted as a follow-up to a previous introductory course and workshop. Once a relationship of trust has been built up with the institution, craftspeople may be inclined to seek help for very specific problems using the specialist expertise available.

47. The introduction of marketing skills into the curriculum of colleges of art and design if offered in a more systematic way, either as a core component of training or as an additional professional course made available immediately after completion of presently available courses, would offer a challenge to the ideological barrier that appears to be present in many art- and design-trained craftspeople.

48. In the much longer term, some means of raising the awareness of the general buying public about the value of craft skills and their unique and particular characteristics should be further cultivated. This is the domain of public bodies such as the Crafts Council, but the FE and HE sectors can have a role to play.

Information

49. There could be considerable benefit from establishing and maintaining a South West Regional Information Database for Craftspeople. Such a centre would encourage craftspeople to consider their businesses within a wider marketing environment. It would ideally:

- **Hold information**, for example on: galleries, retail outlets, craft guilds, suppliers of materials, packaging, professional services, help agencies, craft fairs and exhibitions, potential customers.

- Offer a **regular monitoring service of business opportunities** through the centre's links with local industry and commerce, craft organisation networks and regular scanning of press and periodicals.

- **Serve as a resource**, firstly for craftspeople to do their own research, and secondly as a postal or telephone enquiry service where, upon payment of an annual subscription fee, specific information requests could be handled.

- **Organise marketing research** to be undertaken where necessary, particularly in the area of craft distribution and market identification.

50. Such a centre would have to be subsidised as it is unlikely that craft business proprietors could afford commercial rates for information provision. If funding were to be made available, it could be based in a regional arts organisation, a crafts organisation, or a college of FE or HE. This would encourage craftspeople to see marketing information and marketing research as a valuable tool in the marketing process.

51. Steps should be taken to publish a series of basic fact sheets. These should be regularly updated, made available for a small fee, and designed as guidelines for dealing with particular marketing problems, for instance, pricing strategies, or ways to promote the work; lists of retail outlets; or information sources with contact names. These could be made available through regional agencies such as South West Arts, CoSIRA, local colleges and craft guilds, and be prepared by colleges of FE or HE.

Support systems

52. It would be advantageous to establish local self-help groups amongst craftspeople. As a direct result of the project's marketing workshops, a number of informal help networks have been established amongst craftspeople. These should be encouraged as they appear to lessen the problems of working in isolation. More formal networks already exist in the South West, including guild and craft association membership, but they could perhaps be expanded if there were some form of central register of craftspeople in the area. Such groups could be of particular interest to newly established craft businesses and they may also encourage a number of craftspeople to promote themselves on a group basis and therefore encourage cost-sharing schemes.

53. Developing links between craftspeople and colleges of art and design will also bring benefits. Craftspeople should be encouraged to use the resources of local art and design colleges for help with graphic design, exhibitions and photography. This would offer mutual benefits; somewhat lower charges than professional rates for the craftsperson and the opportunity for students to meet professional challenges in commerce.

54. Proprietors of craft businesses should be encouraged to discuss the problems of working in craft as a commercial venture with students at art, craft and design colleges.

55. A further useful development would be to establish closer liaison and co-ordination between help agencies, colleges and craftspeople at local, regional and central level. It is recommended that if the report findings are accepted, a meeting of relevant organisations should be set up. This should include representatives from South West Arts, the Crafts Council, FACE, CoSIRA, Local Enterprise Agencies, Craft Guilds, representative craftspeople and local colleges. Many of these organisations are active in offering assistance to craft businesses, but they tended to be perceived by those interviewed as working in competition rather than in tandem.

Summary of report findings

56. It is suggested that a summary of the interview findings be made available to those craftspeople in the South West involved in the craft project interviews. This should raise the general level of awareness of the need for marketing skills.

4. 'CRAFT'—A WORD TO START AN ARGUMENT

57. Throughout the project there has been one constant challenge; that of attempting to deal with the extraordinarily elusive character of 'craft' and of its myriad meanings amongst those who practise it and those who appreciate and purchase it. This is not a new problem, but the continuation of the age-old battle of 'art versus craft', which is inextricably entwined with arguments about artistry versus skill and the status of the craftsperson as opposed to the artist. We are still living very much in the philosophical wake of William Morris and the ethics of the arts and crafts movement. A number of the project interviews underline this only too clearly.

58. Like all other areas, the South West accommodates a plethora of activities and individuals under the 'crafts' banner. There are the rural crafts such as thatching and basketmaking which have achieved a peak of skill through generations of practice. There are the modern craft 'industries' such as Dartington Glass. There are those with handskills, but no specific training, who have chosen to make a business out of a hobby or leisure interest encouraged by friends and relatives and perhaps nudged into action by redundancy or unemployment. There are those who have attended colleges of art and design, whose fundamental aim is to make unique pieces of art-craft and who have chosen to work within the creative freedom of the so-called 'artist craftsman'.

59. The sign 'Craft Gallery' may entice a customer into a world of subdued Radio Three, original watercolours, unique wallhangings and fine ceramics and glass; or it may reveal a coffee shop, imported sea shells, stuffed toys and inexpensive third world craft imports sold in their hundreds as souvenirs. It is in this confusing context that the professional craftsperson attempts to make a living as a small business.

60. No consensus is offered either, by the many national and regional organisations involved with craftspeople. South West Arts has suggested the definition: 'Co-ordination of hand, eye and mind to create something unique with a claim to quality in form and design and usually use'. This allows for no division between conception, design and making. The Crafts Council excludes rural crafts from its definition and has, as a matter of policy, emphasised the value of the 'artist craftsman' in promoting the importance of experimental and 'innovative' craft. Organisations such as FACE in Somerset define craft as 'handskills' and include a far wider definition of craft skills.

61. The word 'craft' has been applied and misapplied until it has almost lost its meaning, a fact that has been recognised by some 'craftspeople' who have abandoned that label and redefined themselves as 'makers'. For the purposes of this project, considerable attempts have been made to accommodate these various definitions of craft.

62. By contacting a number of organisations who had links with businesses over the range of such 'craft' definitions, it was hoped to capture something of the diversity of small craft business in the South West. Such attempts may render the research findings more difficult to interpret and to act upon, but such a process is vital, for the interpretation of 'craft' is not purely a matter of philosophical debate, it is of crucial importance to an understanding of the market place.

5. THE CRAFTSPERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

63. Interview respondents were asked a number of questions relating to their entry into craft, their training in both craft and business skills, their attitudes to craft and craft organisations, and the methods they used for marketing their work. During the field research a number of problem areas were identified by proprietors or partners in businesses. The most common areas of difficulty are listed below with illustrative comments where appropriate.

Entry into craft

Training background

64. Almost 80% of the proprietors or partners in the small craft businesses interviewed had received a conventional art, design or craft training in colleges of art and design. The initial type of craft training was not pursued in all cases, but the link between training 'in craft' and setting up a craft business was direct.

65. Twelve per cent had started up craft businesses as a commercial development of a leisure interest and only one proprietor had continued an existing family craft business. The vast majority, therefore, were experiencing all the problems of setting up a business for the first time.

Peter Câre, porcelain maker

John Leach's pottery and shop, Langport, Somerset

66. A remarkable 70% of those interviewed had come into their craft enterprise following a career change. Reasons given were redundancy, either enforced or voluntary; early retirement from the services or police force; as an alternative to teaching art, craft or design subjects; or, in a minority of cases, as a deliberately chosen alternative to working in medium- or large-scale manufacturing industry, often in a junior or middle management capacity. Despite this, only one of those interviewed claimed to have had any formal training in business or management skills.

Business location

67. The range of locations of businesses was diverse, but the most common was the workshop within or attached to the home, and it accounted for 54% of those interviewed. A further 12% operated from separate workshops independent from their home base. An additional 20% worked in craft complexes where expenses were met on an individual basis but where there were some shared costs; for instance, telephone charges and the supporting of a retail shop on site.

68. There were three instances of workshops fronted by the craftsperson's own high street retail outlet (two of which were for knitwear) and two instances of craft workshops within a small development of factory units (in Avon and Devon). There appeared to be no general pattern linking chosen craft and location type, or location type and length of time in business. An exception was noted in the case of those who operated their own retail outlets — here, they had all been in business for between six to ten years.

Problems identified

Isolation

69. Of the 50 crafts businesses considered, 36 consisted of people working alone in their craft enterprise. This led to a major problem of isolation, often reinforced by the workshop's location in a rural setting. This was sometimes said to be a matter of personal choice, but was more usually dictated by the requirement of a low rent. For this reason, a number of small craft enterprises were using converted domestic accommodation as workspace.

70. This isolation appeared to encourage a kind of myopia, where the need to sell to gain income became synonymous with the need to increase production. This feverish emphasis on the need to produce, seemed at times to mitigate against the exploration of new ideas and techniques.

> 'That's one thing that craftspeople don't do and that's plan and think. We feel if we're not actually making, that we're about to go bankrupt.' (a potter)

Lack of training in business and marketing skills

71. In general, there was scant evidence of training in business skills amongst those interviewed. Those trained in studio practice at colleges of art and design had received little or no instruction in business skills.

> 'Selling never entered our minds . . . it was expression as an artist that was emphasised . . . We had no channelling whatsoever.' (a jewellery maker)

72. Fifteen per cent of interviewees, including some who had been in business over a long period, cited the keeping of accounts and the submitting of tax returns as problem areas. Many who had been in business for over five years raised the problem of expansion policy, feeling too ill-equipped and too ill-informed to make such decisions themselves and distrusting professional advice.

> 'I had no training at all . . . I learnt by trial and error.' (a ceramics maker)

> 'Help in how to sort out accounts and tax would be useful . . . it's mystifying.' (a jeweller)

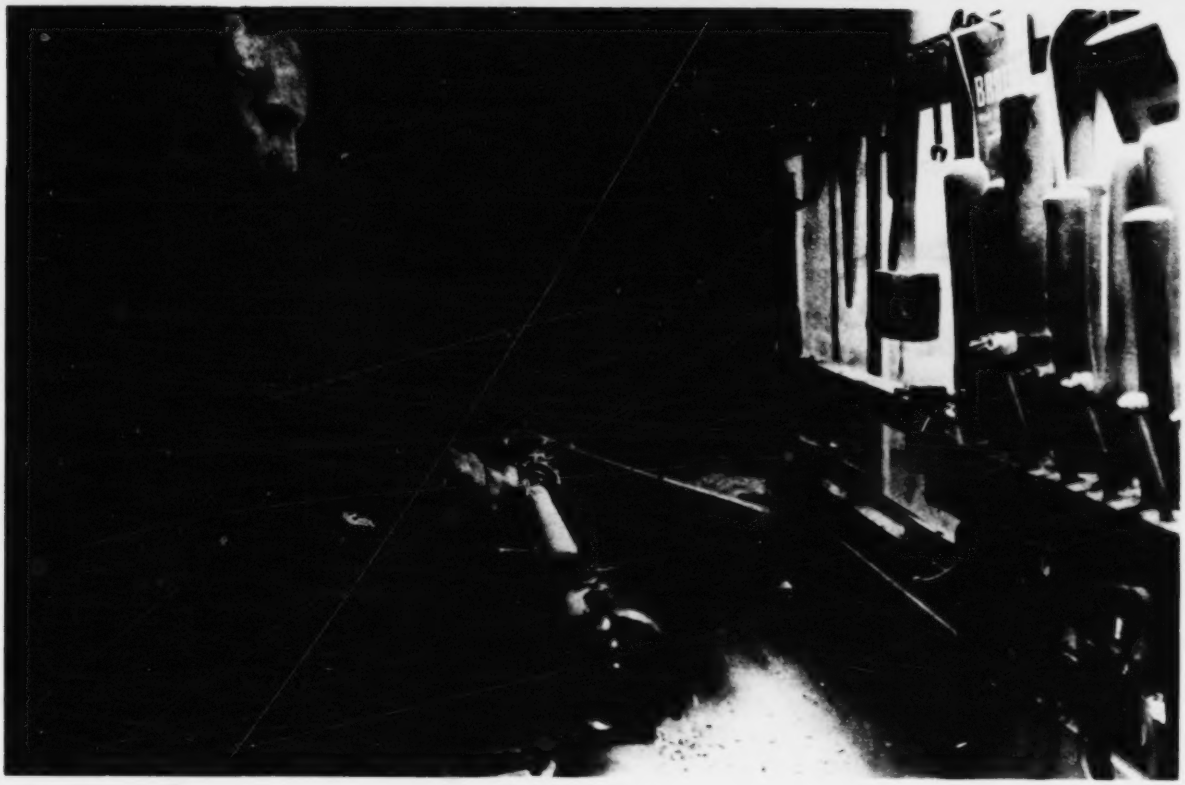
Finance

Start-up finance

73. Just over half of those interviewed raised the problem of getting start- up finance or expansion finance. Many craftspeople, particularly those in crafts that require high capital investment (e.g. glassblowing, pottery and ceramics, and furniture making) had experienced great difficulty in getting start-up finance.

74. Almost half the sample had approached the Crafts Council and other interested agencies for start-up grants or other financial assistance, but the vast majority had been rejected. As a result, many start-ups had been supported by family finance and many young independent craftspeople had begun their workshops in parental homes.

> 'I had a Crafts Council setting-up grant of around £2,500. I also begged and borrowed from friends and got myself a friendly bank manager.' (a glassmaker)



Paul Spriggs, woodcraftsman and rushworker

'I used my own capital for start-up finance . . . I had no help from South West Arts or the Crafts Council.' (a furniture maker)

'My family lent me a deposit for the workshop. I bought tools cheaply when I was at college.' (a jewellery maker)

'I had no official help with finance. The workshop was subsidised by monies earned when teaching abroad.' (a ceramics maker)

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

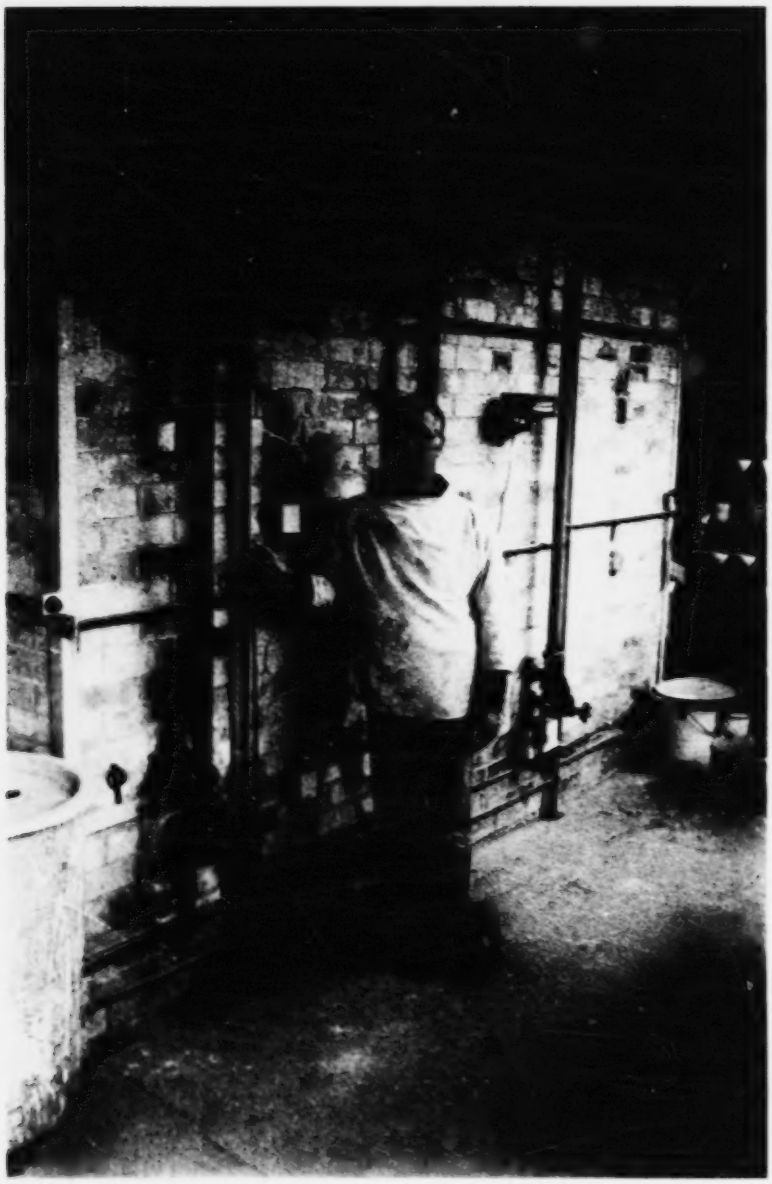
75. Just under 20% had benefited from the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, which gives financial support to businesses in their first year of operation. This incentive was well regarded but there was some trepidation regarding the effect of removal of this financial 'cushion' after the first year. Some had failed to make proper allowance for this in their financial planning and accounting system and so suffered severe headaches in year two when the buffer was withdrawn.

'The EAS was a good and a bad idea. I think that, as it stood, it created an awful lot of businesses that are going to last for a year — the year the allowance lasts. For many it is really an extension of dole money and just helps to create an awful lot of businesses that are going to go under with a lot of grief.' (a weaver)

Cost of equipment

76. Fifteen per cent of interviewees raised the problem of equipment costs. This was a particular problem to potters, ceramicists and glassmakers who needed kilns and furnaces on site.

> 'The glass furnace is terribly expensive. In addition it's impossible to work at the furnace for more than three hours per day as the heat of it is so exhausting. It's therefore quite common amongst glassmakers to share furnaces.'
>
> (a glassmaker)



Potter David Winckley with his kiln

Income and hours

77. A common feature was the incidence of low turnover, long working hours and very low earnings.

> 'You're never going to make any money working in the Crafts unless your work is regarded as "ART". I make a profit, but not a living wage.' (a basket maker)

78. Many professional craftspeople were forced to supplement their low incomes by adding part-time teaching to an otherwise 'full-time' craft business. Some respondents commented that the present educational climate made this a less likely future option.

79. Where husbands and wives were working together and coping with a young family, it was common for the childcarer to be working part-time to supplement the income from the craft enterprise.

> 'I don't know many people without a second back-up income . . . My wife's part-time salary is essential.'
>
> (a ceramics maker)

80. Despite the low turnover, many craftspeople were prepared to continue at low income levels. The majority were not motivated in their work by potential high income levels but by personal creative development and fulfilment.

> 'If people want to do it despite the money, then go ahead by all means but you've got to realise that you're going to have to work very long hours for a very low income.'
>
> (a handwoven garments maker)

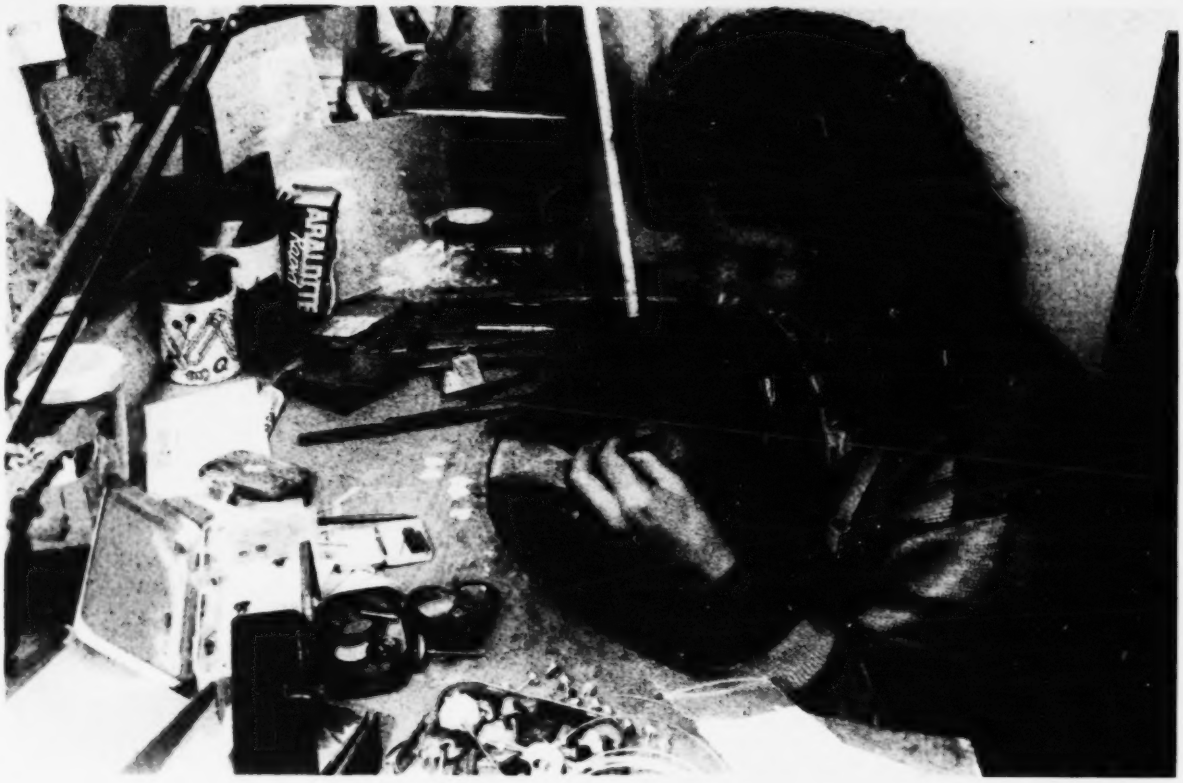
> 'A commission might get you £7,000 for one piece, but I feel happy with £5 per hour. I have no desire to be wealthy, just to make a living from what I do. Money may be other people's goal but it's not mine.' (a tapestry weaver)

Turnover

81. Interviewees were asked if they were willing to indicate turnover levels and 75% were prepared to give some broad indications. On this basis, turnover appears to have ranged from around £5,000 per annum to above £35,000 per annum. Broadly speaking, those working in pottery and ceramics had turnovers which ranged over the whole spectrum. Jewellery appeared to suffer low turnover levels, as did handcrafted furniture. Printed and woven textiles and knitwear fared slightly better and noticeably higher figures were attained by those working in studio glass.

82. It must be noted that no profit figures were quoted and that, in the case of glassmaking, fuel costs were extremely high and therefore substantially eroded the apparent benefits of higher turnover levels. In general, turnover appeared to increase in line with length of time in business.

83. Of those willing to disclose turnover levels, 70% had been trained in art and design. Of this group, 70% claimed to have turnovers of under £10,000 per annum and 60% of under £8,000 per annum. This appeared to be in direct contrast to those who had entered their craft business as a career change or as a maker previously untrained in a craft skill. Here 84% claimed to have turnovers in excess of £10,000 per annum and 50% in excess of £14,000 per annum.



Holly Webb, jeweller, Somerset

Cashflow 84. Around 20% of those interviewed raised the persistent problem of cashflow. This was common to all crafts and to new and established businesses. Energy costs were identified as contributing factors by glassmakers and bad debts or lengthy waits for payment by those in other crafts.

> 'There are specific problems with glass. Overheads are unduly high and continuous. It makes products very expensive for glassmakers because you can't turn the furnace off and therefore the cash flow is a really big problem.'
>
> (a glassmaker)

> 'The biggest problem I've had has been with shops and galleries being 'unethical'. X (a large department store) nearly bankrupted me about five years ago through not coming up with payment when they promised it.' (a weaver)

> 'I don't want to be supplying one major company — it's too risky. I once had to supply 27 shops in Europe that belonged to the X group. It was an order over £5,000, equal to a fifth of our turnover then. They wouldn't pay. I had to resort to a lawyer.' (a potter)

Norman Stuart Clarke handworking hot glass

Help organisations

85. Attitudes towards official help agencies varied. There were noticeable regional differences and some positive and some negative responses. Overall, there were strong feelings amongst 40% of those interviewed that most official organisations had failed to help in any practical way. Some art, craft and design agencies were also criticised for their unwillingness to advise on the reasons for refusal of financial aid. This led to frustration and eventually bitterness on the part of those who had made repeated applications.

Craft guilds and associations

86. Sixty per cent of interviewees belonged to a craft guild or association, either regional or national in membership. Strong views were expressed both in favour of, and against, membership. Membership of a craft guild was not considered worthwhile by those looking for professional assistance in marketing their work and, until recently, guilds have been viewed as a means of meeting like-minded people and of exchanging technical information. The journals of such guilds and associations confirm this emphasis. Some craftspeople sought membership deliberately as a means of gaining exposure at the annual guild exhibition, or to have their work sold through a guild shop.

> 'Guild membership is only helpful in the way that a lot of people get to see your work and some of them come back to you.' (a potter)

The Crafts Council

87. Considerable criticism was levelled at the Crafts Council for its perceived failure to offer adequate help in the South West region. It was suggested that it gave undue emphasis to the work of 'artist craftsmen' and was geared to the requirements of London-based craftspeople. The Council was felt to be unhelpful in its policy of giving no reasons for the refusal of grant applications, or guidance for future reapplications.

> 'The Crafts Council doesn't like my work. I've applied three times and I've just applied again . . . They really don't like traditional work. I feel that this leaning of theirs is very unfortunate.' (a furniture maker)

> 'There are a lot of very good craftspeople in the provinces who offer a good service and the Crafts Council don't help these sort of people.' (a jewellery designer/maker)

88. There were criticisms too of the policy of 'preaching to the converted'.

> 'If the intention of the Crafts Council was to encourage communication between craftspeople then this has been achieved. The next step is to take the collective presence and make it more accessible to a larger number of the general public.' (a ceramics maker)

89. However, those who were included on the Crafts Council Index felt that it was a useful promotional tool.

> 'Because I am in the index my work sells in the V and A Craft Shop which is a good and prominent outlet . . . I think that being on the Crafts Council Index is a good handle.' (a potter)

90. There was also a favourable reaction towards the recent policy document which indicated an increased emphasis on the marketing of craft work.

> 'If it is done with discrimination and if the right contacts are made at the right levels, then I think it's an excellent policy.' (a potter)

CoSIRA

91. A number of those interviewed had approached the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas for financial and marketing assistance. Reactions were mixed, but some counties, in particular Somerset, received praise for their marketing assistance, whilst other regional offices were quoted as having given good advice on planning and on equipment purchase decisions.

Materials
Quality

92. A number of craftspeople identified problems in the regularity of supply and the consistency in quality of raw materials. This was particularly significant in the case of potters, for whom an entire firing, representing perhaps a month's making, could be ruined by substandard raw material. All craftspeople indicated that a comprehensive source of information on suppliers of high-quality materials would be useful. It was suggested that this should include information on suppliers of ancillary items such as packaging materials.

Quantity

93. A number identified the problem of costly raw materials due to inability to buy in bulk and obtain discounts. Some form of bulk-buying organisation was suggested as a possible way forward.

94. Design constraints were mentioned by a leatherworker who raised the problem of only standard colours being available in small quantity orders.

> 'I am limited to what is available from commercial tanneries . . . you have to order 60 skins at a time to be able to state a colour preference and I can't afford to hold that kind of stock.' (a leatherworker)

Penny Smith, designer in leather

Product range

95. Some of those interviewed deliberately chose to offer a reasonably wide range in both price and type of products. This was thought to give some protection against fluctuations in fashions and changing consumer taste.

> 'We listen to what people say when they come in . . . and respond. We have a very wide range of things . . . about 90 repeatable different items in several colourways and glazes. It's probably one of the widest ranges of any pottery.' (a potter)

96. Others chose to pursue a dual system of 'bread and butter' lines which gave a steady income, against which 'one-offs' could be tried as experimental pieces.

'It's all blown glass. I do "one-offs" and cheaper lines . . . My gift shop lines are my bread and butter lines, so I'm faced with the problem of where to sell them both and at what prices.' (a glassmaker)

Product quantity
'One-offs' versus 'repeats'

97. Craftspeople in the self-identified group of 'artist craftspeople' generally preferred to work in 'one-offs' or limited editions. A considerable number of the craft businesses within this category saw this as their raison d'etre.

'To me the point and purpose of craftwork is to provide unique items. Mass manufactured goods are made by the million, whereas I never repeat any exact combination of pattern and colour. If someone asked me to do fifty of a thing I wouldn't do it. Not unless I was absolutely desperately broke and the bank manager was harassing me severely.' (a weaver)

98. Some were prepared to continue producing solely 'one-offs' despite the belief that this would limit their income potential.

'Production work is almost the only way you can possibly make a living . . . you're never going to make a living from producing one-off pieces, but my work is not repeatable . . . each one is like a painting . . . it is created as I go along. . .' (a potter)

99. Some 'artist craftspeople' cited instances of being offered large orders by buyers representing department store chains in the UK, Europe or the USA, but many had declined to take up these opportunities. The common reasons given were that repeat production somehow 'compromised' their status as 'craftspeople' or 'artists'.

100. A number of potters felt that by producing repetitive moulded ware which required less skill, they were somehow reducing their status as craftspeople amongst their peer group. Hence there is a direct link between attitudes to quantity production and craft ideology.

101. In contrast, other craftspeople interviewed offered a different perspective:

'I'd be quite happy to make a thousand of an item, if I had the right production team to do it.' (a glass designer)

'I'd be quite happy to make quantities. I would subcontract the work and continue experimenting with new designs myself.' (a toymaker)

'I found that piskies were selling like hot-cakes so I decided to go into full-time production. I sold between 2,500 and 3,000 in the first season.' (a cold-cast giftware maker and potter)

'As our products are made from interchangeable elements this makes production easier and more flexible. We are geared for small batch production.' (a furniture maker)

'I would be quite prepared to make sizeable runs of a similar product . . . I could do a hundred of one design if required, but larger quantities would take too much of my available making-time.' (a studio glassmaker)

Production ceilings

102. Where businesses were operating with a single maker or a partnership, this had obvious repercussions on their production capability. Many were already operating at a maximum output level and if demand were to increase unexpectedly (for instance, by the placing of a large order), many did not have the flexibility to meet it except by requesting a longer delivery period.

'If I get a good order I am busy for three weeks, but a few orders mean that I am at maximum capacity. I could subcontract but would the quality be high enough? Sub-contractors charge £8 per hour while I can charge only £7 per hour myself!' (a furniture maker)

103. One striking exception to this was the area of hand and machine knitwear, where fluctuations in demand were readily accommodated by the use of additional outworkers who were paid on a piece-rate basis.

Quality control

104. The economies of batch production were often not available unless the craftsperson was willing to employ and, if necessary, train an assistant. In some cases craftspeople were willing

Apprentice Elizabeth Stoneman of Vivian Handweaves at the Wheel Craft Workshops, Chudleigh

to do this, but there was often resistance on the grounds that quality would drop, or that the employment of an assistant would somehow break the single relationship between 'idea and execution' typical of arts and crafts philosophy. A quarter of those interviewed raised the problem of quality control; just over half of these worked in the area of hand- or machine-made knitwear or printed textiles, and regularly used outworkers.

Employees

105. Almost a quarter of the sample employed assistants, usually in the form of YTS placements. Two had used the FACE sponsorship scheme and found that the system worked well. Both sponsors (proprietors of small craft businesses) and placements were enthusiastic about the scheme. However, 75% preferred to work alone or in a husband and wife team. Some commented that the employment of an assistant would cause too much time to be given up to additional paperwork or that the making was too individual for delegation.

> 'I couldn't give the decoration to someone else to do. It's too personal.' (a toymaker)

YTS

106. There were some favourable reports on the use of YTS placements. In two instances trainees had been taken on as employees after the initial year's training. However, it was suggested that a YTS placement with a crafts business should be of longer duration.

Outworkers

107. Only 20% of interviewees used outworkers. Of this group 70% worked in printed, woven or machine-knitted textiles. The outworkers were used to make up garments, or in the case of machine knitwear to knit to prescribed designs and supplied colours and to make up into completed items. They were paid on a piece-work basis and called upon as and when demand required.

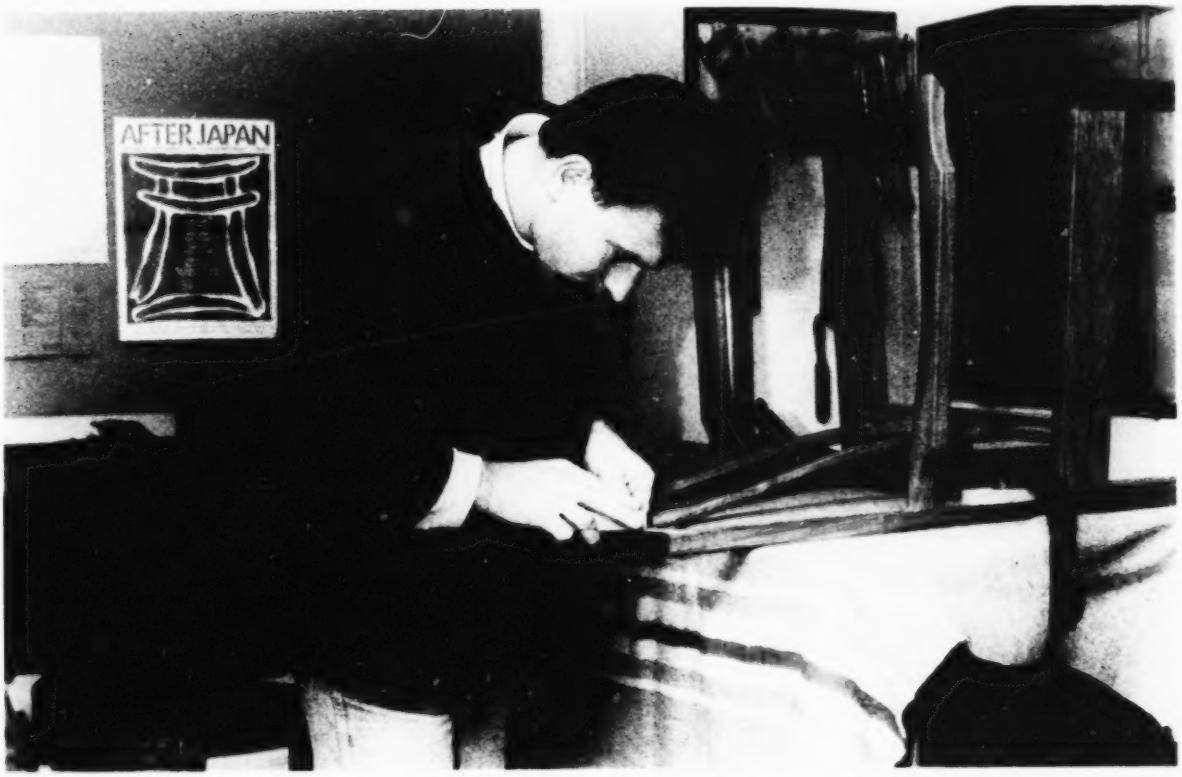
108. Some felt that this worked well. The major difficulty voiced was that of quality control. In one instance, the proprietor had decided instead to take on employees in the workshop.

> 'Some outworkers are better and more conscientious than others, but it can cost you a tremendous amount of time finding out which are the good and the bad ones. It's not worth it, it really isn't . . . With work done in the workshop it's far easier to keep control, to see what is going on at different stages and to correct things if they go wrong.' (a handloom weaver)

Employees and business expansion

109. Attitudes to business expansion varied. Some were positively against the idea of taking on employees, others saw future expansion as desirable. In two instances, where the proprietors had more than eight years' experience of running a business (a weaver and a potter), a conscious decision to reduce the size of the business had been made. In both cases the reasons given were the desire to continue making rather than to become solely a manager of a small craft business, and the need to retain quality levels.

'At its largest I had fourteen outworkers, three direct employees and two trainees. I was doing export and trade orders. The business was getting bigger and bigger, and worse and worse in terms of quality and in terms of being a terrible harassment. I was spending all my time organising piles of work for other people and mending what they'd done wrong rather than doing the work myself. I took the conscious decision not to keep it at that pitch. I know now, over the years, that the way that works best for me is a couple of outworkers and a trainee and 90% of my business here.' **(a handloom weaver)**



Keith Newton, assistant to furniture maker Alan Peters

Pricing 110. Pricing was the most frequently quoted problem and was raised by all types of craft business at all levels of experience. Nearly three-quarters of those interviewed ranked this as their major problem. Many were confused regarding pricing and mark-up policy and felt themselves to be unprofessional or too subjective in their approach. A number complained that the substantial mark-ups (a norm of 100% +), added to wholesale prices by crafts shops and galleries, were unrealistically high.

'Pricing is one of my most difficult problems because my work is not directly comparable with any other . . . My prices are so arbitrary and that worries me too . . . I think you'll find that, on the whole, craftsmen have a very bad sense of money, mainly because they don't earn a lot and they don't see (their prices) in relation to 'normal' salaries. It takes a while to have the courage to step up your prices and then you think that's too high and you get frightened and come down again. So pricing is a terrible problem.'
(a potter)

'It's bound to be difficult for any craftsperson initially. The tendency is for people to either grossly over-price their own labour and their own products and then they don't sell and they go out of business, or they tend to be self-denigrating and ignore all the hidden costs . . . it's very difficult to create a balance.' (a weaver)

'I'm dreadful, it's totally subjective. I don't use the Crafts Council recommended method because I just couldn't sell my pots for the price it would work out at.' (a potter)

'I'm not terribly efficient at pricing. I'm also bad at judging a price for one-offs . . . There's a psychological sticking price with silver I think . . . you can charge a lot more if it is gold.' (a jewellery maker)

'We've always had trouble with pricing. There are different schools of thought . . . You've got competition . . . you've got how much it costs you to make something . . . you've got how much you think it's worth . . . and you've got what somebody is prepared to pay.' (a glassmaker)

111. Some approached the problem by working backwards from the estimated overheads for the coming year and dividing it by an achievable output level. In this way they arrived at a price per piece. From this base price level, adjustments were made to allow a profit margin.

'I don't use an hourly rate. I know my overheads for the year and my work output. I price to cover this and allow myself a price margin. If the piece is very good and I'm pleased with it, I may price it a little higher. If it's imperfect, I adjust the price downwards. The price of my work is not its cost but its value.' (a potter)

112. Those who chose to produce both 'bread and butter' lines and 'one-offs' sometimes adopted a dual pricing system.

'I base my prices on whether products are "bread and butter" lines or "one-offs". This is my basis for a wholesale price decision. "One-offs" are based on an hourly rate plus the cost of materials.' (a leatherworker)

113. Where makers sold the same product through a variety of outlets, the problem was compounded.

'It's a problem trying to sell the same products at very different venues . . . expenses at various places are vastly different but you are charging the same retail price . . . that's a problem.' (a potter)

114. Two proprietors of small pottery businesses who had been running their crafts businesses for over 10 years adopted a slightly more sophisticated approach.

'First of all I went round and made comparisons. I knew I could throw fast, and I was time-disciplined. I found out about the opposition and priced myself marginally under.' (a potter)

'The basic problem of pricing is to meet your fixed commitments . . . This means your units of production must be able to be priced to meet these commitments. Above this there is a certain arbitrary element . . . If you're making individual items as we do, there is a desirability factor . . . a "perceived value" . . . It's partly what the market will stand and what your nose tells you.' (a potter)

Selling

Making and selling

115. Many craftspeople (24%) working alone in their business, commented on the difficulty of having to be creator, maker and salesperson for their work. A number of husband and wife partnerships were interviewed. Here the mutual support system appeared to help and offered a flexibility of roles. In some instances one proprietor took over the commercial role and the other became predominantly maker. This seemed to be an effective division of labour.

'I can see no way in which an individual maker can be both manufacturer and marketing agent.' (a ceramics maker)

'I think by and large we all come into this game because we like making. We are very production orientated. If we sell, it's somehow a bonus.' (a potter)

Direct selling

116. Many craftspeople had attempted to do their own selling, often citing the Crafts Council 'gallery and shop listings' as first ports of call in prospective selling trips. Of those interviewed, 40% positively disliked the selling aspect of their business.

'I would love to get out of the selling part, it's not my forte.' (a tapestry weaver)

'I'm no good at selling my work . . . because what I make is too close to me to be able to look at it objectively. I can only see what's wrong with it, not what's right with it.' (a potter)

'I hate selling and tend to apologise for my work in front of buyers.' (a potter)

'I have got used to selling . . . I used to try and put it off!' (a jeweller)

'I'm not a salesman. I can't talk anyone into buying anything they wouldn't anyway. . .' (a furniture maker)

117. The majority, however, still preferred the idea of retail selling to the wholesaling option.

'I'm a great believer in retail selling . . . I don't think it's difficult. It depends on how you set about it. I make more

money selling retail than wholesale and I enjoy the contact with the customer and the feedback I get.' (a potter)

118. Some businesses sold direct from their workshops, but most used other outlets, e.g. guild shows, craft fairs (local and regional), craft markets, craft shops and galleries.

Selling from the workshop

119. Most businesses interviewed were happy to sell work direct from their workshop but for some this led to problems in deciding upon differential mark-ups for local retail outlets. Nearly one quarter felt that selling from their own workshop was a mixed blessing.

> 'I don't want visitors interrupting my work. Those that seek me out are serious buyers.' (a leatherworker)

> 'Customers talk to you whilst you're making in the workshop. I only actually stop work when the customer says "Can I buy this?" . . . I'm very disciplined about this.' (a potter)

> 'The advantage of being in a craft workshop complex is the cheap rent and two to three thousand visitors passing through the centre in the summer. The disadvantage is that they are a distraction and there are many "unserious" buyers.' (a furniture maker)

Craft markets

120. Regular customer feedback on product lines was seen as the major advantage of selling through local and regional craft markets and fairs. However, in general they were felt to be suffering from waning public interest and declining status. Despite this, nearly one-third of those interviewed had taken part in local craft markets.

> 'Local craft markets are often a long drive and usually equal low prices. It's heavy on time and often low on response.' (a potter)

> 'Craft market is a misused expression. It's associated with Women's Institute basket making and who has baked the best cakes.' (a toymaker)

Craft fairs

121. Like 'craft market', the term 'craft fair' is open to various interpretations. They may be trestle table affairs in a local village hall or the highly professional and costly trade fairs held annually at Chelsea or Harrogate. Of those interviewed, 20% had taken a stall in the prestigious Chelsea Craft Fair or the Harrogate Gift Fair or British Craft Trade Fair.

Own shop

122. Nine interviewees had their own showroom or shop attached to the workshop. Of these, five were potters and a further two had high street outlets and sold hand- and machine-made knitwear. The latter tried to spread their risk by selling other craftspeople's work and, in one instance, yarns as well.

Shared retail outlet

123. There was one instance of a number of makers sharing the cost and staffing of a retail outlet. The shop was staffed on a rota basis (one day in twelve). In this way, the craftspeople were able to promote themselves and their respective crafts and to get regular feed-back from the buying public. The shop took a small commission (between ten and twelve per cent). The craftspeople received the value of their own sales less this commission. They were thus able to sell their work at a level above wholesale price but below gallery mark-up levels. This was perceived as a major advantage.

> 'The general public love it. A rota is on view with dates of the craftspeople's attendance. So the public can come in on specific days and discuss commissions. The potted histories of the craftspeople on display generate a lot of interest and we have regular customers.' (a jeweller)

Indirect selling

Retail outlets in craft centres

124. A number ran their businesses from a workshop within a complex of other craft workshops. Often these shared a single retail outlet for the entire complex. This system was regarded as both beneficial and detrimental. The level of benefit was usually seen as increasing in direct proportion to the level of control exercised by the craftspeople over the selection, display and pricing of their work. The main difficulty was thought to be the confusion raised in the mind of the public. Were they in the workshop to view 'the craftsman at work' or could they buy direct from the craftsperson? If they bought direct would the price be

Frontage of 'Makers', a crafts co-operative in Taunton, Somerset

cheaper than in the craft centre shop? This therefore raised problems for both the craftsperson and the potential buyer. If the craftsperson was there only to be viewed, why take a workshop in a crafts centre when the only benefit, apart from cheaper workshop space, was interruption by unserious buyers? The views of craftspeople regarding the benefits of craft complexes were therefore diverse.

> 'I hate community or group workshops, where you're o ght in like puppets to perform and sell.' (a potter)

> 'We've gone from two craftspeople to sixteen and from a neglected totally unkempt shoddy building to what we are now, in three years . . . We have an extremely stringent selection procedure and ask them a lot of nosey questions about where and what they're at. If they still seem serious, their request is presented to a full meeting of the group for which there has to be a written application and work samples. Then it's voted on . . . We want each craft to be different so there is no direct competition. The second criterion is quality which is very important indeed. The third is that they should be a full-scale practising business, the fourth that they should be co-operative in the way they run their business and that they agree with the workshop constitution . . . We don't want a craftsperson renting a workshop and turning his back on the mutual needs of the group.' (a weaver and founder member of a crafts centre in Devon)

Trade fairs

125. A minority thought that attendance at prestigious trade fairs was an ultimate goal and would lead to large orders. Four interviewees had taken a stand at the Harrogate Craft Trade Fair or the Harrogate Gift Fair. Another four had exhibited at the Chelsea Craft Fair. Harrogate was favoured by potters and knitwear makers, and Chelsea by those working in woven textiles — in particular, wallhangings. However, there was disagreement over the value of such exercises, as costs were said to be high and rising at both venues. At Harrogate it was said that buyers were declining in number and competition in knitwear was becoming ever fiercer.

> 'I did the Chelsea Fair and did well. It's the only craft show worth doing.' (a potter)

> 'I've done the Chelsea Fair four times. It is the main place for my work, but you have to take a stand for five or six days which is a big commitment (a jeweller)

> 'A lot of our UK trade fairs are a waste of time. In the US they have big craft fairs. I went to the Harrogate Fair but I didn't do too much business. I don't think that British craft buyers like buying like that yet. It's too impersonal.' (a glassmaker)

The use of agents

126. Of the 50 craft businesses interviewed, only 15% regularly used the services of an agent to sell their work. Most had tried agents and dispensed with them. The criticism generally levelled

was that the typical agent represented a range of companies producing a variety of different goods and it was agreed that this arrangement was inappropriate to the selling of craft work. Few had found an agent who was both sufficiently committed to their work and sufficiently sensitive to the appropriateness of craft work outlets. Furthermore, many felt that the percentage rate of commission was unduly high.

Retail outlets

127. Most of those businesses which had been in operation for five years or so had established a network of good retail outlets. These were usually in the UK but sometimes abroad.

Craft galleries

128. Most craftspeople regarding themselves as 'artist-craftsmen' preferred to sell their work through prestigious galleries. Those who had been in business for a few years had managed to find regular gallery outlets spread over the UK. However, some felt that the gallery system was elitist and too closely linked with the art market in its psychology.

> 'If one gallery would take the whole output I would love it. I could know where they are going and get on with the work . . .' (a tapestry weaver)

> 'Galleries offer exhibitions. It's important to have exhibitions. It starts at college where your mentality is that of an artist not a pure craftsman.' (a glassmaker)

> 'Galleries are not interested in your work, just in your name and who you are.' (a ceramics maker)

> 'Galleries are essential for sales and as a window for your work. Some are doing OK but others are in dire straits.' (a porcelain maker)

> 'Some galleries have a gift shop mentality. They are only worried about the price. Most of them are not really galleries . . . You have to be careful how you approach them because you don't want to imagine that they are trying to build you up as an artist.' (a glassmaker)

Sale or return

129. The most criticised practice of galleries was the sale or return system. It was disliked by all, they felt that the risk was placed entirely on the craftsperson and that in many cases slow-moving items were left on dust-ridden shelves, to the detriment of both the gallery and the maker's image. It was potters as a group who were most hostile to this practice.

> 'I try to avoid sale or return. People starting out might use it, but we try not to once we are established.' (a potter)

> 'It's not worth doing sale or return even if you can't afford not to!' (a potter)

Department stores

130. A number of craftspeople had tried to sell their work through department stores, in particular one-off departments of leading London stores. There were complaints about delays in payment and about the inappropriate display and context of craft

Wheel Craft Workshops, Chudleigh, South Devon

work. Many felt that there may be potential here, but that the attitude of craft buyers would need to be more flexible to accommodate individual work and smaller order sizes. Also there was a risk of dependence upon a single purchaser organisation.

> 'It's alright for the big boys that are prestigious, but they are more ruthless and they will drop you like a hot brick and then you've got to look around for five or six different outlets to replace them.' (a potter)

> 'Most department stores are not a possibility. The philosophy of bulk ordering by department stores is a barrier for craftspeople, the exception being the one-off departments of L. . .'s and H. . .'s.' (a porcelain maker)

Gift shops

131. Gift shops were generally regarded as unsuitable, but sometimes necessary, outlets for the craftspeople's work. It was felt that many gift shop buyers could not discriminate between handcrafted and mass-produced work and were insensitive to the need for a proper 'context' for craft work. Despite the fact that a majority of the craftwork made was likely to be bought as gifts, the vast majority of those interviewed were unwilling to see a possible connection between their business and the gift trade. This serves to reinforce the notion that some craftspeople have a strong and highly personal craft ideology, an argument explored further in paragraphs 146–149.

> 'I'm selling in gift shops now and it's very, very tricky. I've had to do that because I've borrowed a lot and I've got

enormous bank repayments so, for the next few years, I have to sell to a wider market . . . They really want factory stuff.' (a glassmaker)

'I wouldn't hold my work up against arty-crafty stuff, i.e. handthrown pottery. Yet it gets sold in the same shops!' (a cold cast giftware and pressed ware potter)

Direct marketing
Mail order

132. A few of those questioned had tried mail order sales or were thinking of doing so. In general the drawback was seen as the need to keep a substantial stock of items in readiness, which meant money tied up in stock and therefore potential cashflow problems.

'I once had the opportunity to be in a catalogue but the firm told me that I had to keep a stock of 150 items which would cost me £6,500 which the bank would not let me have. It would have meant £6,500 tied up in stock with a risk of no take up.' (a toymaker)

'Mail order . . . well, there are a lot of problems with this, mainly the question of repeats. Mail order companies want catalogue items to be photographed and they want a thousand in stock of the same item ready to send out. It's kind of contradictory to the idea of "unique" craft.' (a weaver)

'I'm quite interested in the idea of mail order. Not in the conventional way of mail-shotting and waiting for a response, but in offering a postal service to people who come here.' (a potter)

Exporting

133. Twenty per cent expressed a strong interest in selling abroad, but the majority lacked the information necessary to do so. It was suggested that urgent help was needed in this area. Of those who had tried foreign sales, the major difficulties were seen as understanding and handling the necessary documentation, dealing with packaging requirements, late payments, and extremely high mark-up levels.

'The problem with selling abroad is that the prices go up and up. By the time it reaches the customer, the price is astronomic. In the US this means that prices are four hundred per cent of the UK price. (a glassmaker)

Promotion and advertising
Promotional material

134. In general, the quantity and quality of promotional material produced by the craft businesses interviewed was poor. Some had produced well-designed letterhead/business cards, price lists and other promotional material but in many cases promotional material was sadly lacking. Nearly half of those interviewed felt themselves to be weak in this area although most perceived such material as necessary for the advancement of their businesses. The usual reasons given for its absence were shortage of time due to the pressures of production.

'I produce no literature. It's on my list of important things to do. I need a brochure.' (a furniture maker)

'I find that a lot of craftspeople fall down on presentation . . . I actually need someone to come and advise me on packaging and promoting myself. Everyone loves the work but I could present it better.' (a jeweller)

135. Another key problem identified was the lack of finance, and this prohibited the employment of graphic design consultants or professional photographers. For many, their work needed high-quality colour reproduction and in some specific areas of craft, for instance in glassware, they required high levels of photographic skill and consequently were faced with high fees.

'Photography costs money. I tried to do my own and found I wasn't capable. I had to earn money before I could afford to employ a photographer. We've now got some good photos and colour slides.' (a glassmaker)

136. As costs were often considered prohibitive, some craftspeople had decided to try group promotional activities.

'We produce a group leaflet called "Quantock Craftsmen". It's a workshop and gallery leaflet. It was a result of craftspeople linking together for mutual support. We didn't feel we were in competition because of the range of combined crafts and we could produce an enormous quantity of leaflets for a small price per head. The public could visit all six craftspeople in one day. As a group thing it looks a bit less like advertising and a bit more like information.' (a potter)

Advertising

137. Only a small minority attempted to budget for advertising and promotion costs. Advertising in magazines and local papers had been tried in some cases but was felt to be costly, uncertain and unquantifiable in terms of response.

'We've tried advertising and found it to be very uncertain compared with leafleting which is by far the best. If we do direct leafleting, within a half a day we get a response, but with newspaper advertising you never know . . . it's just keeping your name in view.' (a potter)

Marketing

Marketing and selling

138. When craftspeople were asked whether they had encountered any specific problems in marketing their work, it became apparent that in the majority of cases 'marketing' was regarded as synonymous with 'selling'. It also appeared that 'marketing' as a concept was generally misunderstood.

'Marketing of products seems to be associated with a completely different world . . . it seems to me to suggest a little factory churning things out.' (a potter)

Total marketing concept

139. The majority of interviewees tended to regard decisions on pricing, product range, promotion, sales outlets and product distribution as discrete problems without envisaging their interdependence. This was often compounded by a lack of medium- or long-term financial or marketing planning.

Lack of marketing information

140. A further problem raised was the paucity of information on grant-awarding bodies, raw materials suppliers, potential retail outlets, and potential customers. The majority kept some kind of customer mailing list, but did little 'marketing research' other than this. Of those interviewed, 30% specified the lack of marketing information as a problem, many being those who worked in isolated locations.

> 'I feel sure that a certain amount of basic information is needed.This would be very helpful for anyone working in isolation . . . who doesn't feel part of a grapevine.'
>
> (a potter)

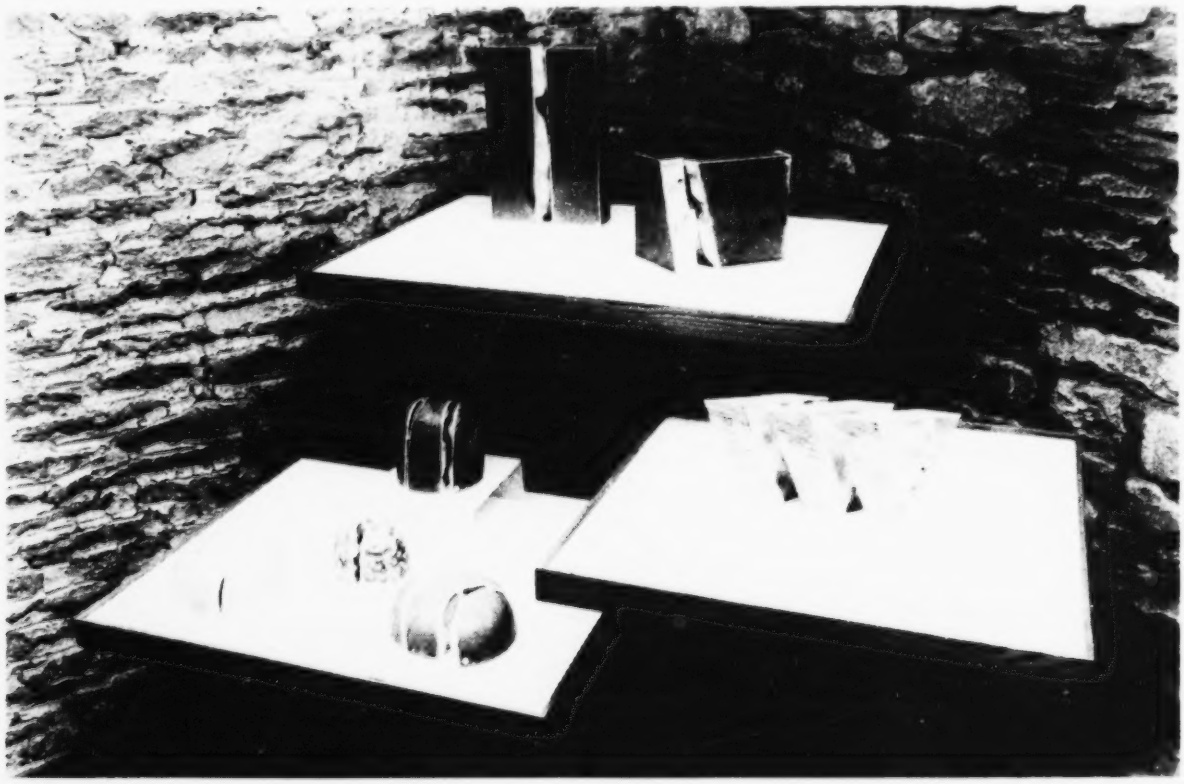
Defining the market

141. Only a few businesses appeared to have much success in defining or quantifying (however crudely) the market for their products. Many had a reasonably clear idea of a typical customer profile (if typicality existed), but few had taken active steps to find new customers based upon this knowledge. Therefore decisions made, for instance, on the development of new products, tended to be based upon instinct and personal choice rather than upon an identified customer demand.

> 'I have no real perception of my market. I respond to my latest crisis. There's no time available.' (a furniture maker)

Defining the product

142. Because of the highly creative nature of some of the work, the craftspeople sometimes had difficulty in defining the nature of their product. This obviously compounded their marketing problems.



Ceramics by Peter Care

'They are large and they are delicate. They are neither pots nor are they containers or sculptures . . . nobody who wants a useful object is going to buy one of my pots and nobody who has a preconception of what pottery is, is going to buy one of my pots . . . they are eccentric . . . and so they are difficult to market.' (a potter)

The marketing environment

143. However, it was noticeable that those who had been in business longer (in addition to some astute newcomers) were far more aware of their market and of its changing nature.

'Selling pottery is now very different from three or four years ago. There is a definite trend coming out of London each year . . . a fashion, and it changes each year and everyone follows suit. We are more controlled by our market now.' (a potter)

'To start with I was in the middle of two markets and had to make a choice . . . so I went upmarket and started to produce porcelain. The market seemed to polarise about five years ago when the middle market disappeared.' (a porcelain maker)

'Fashions change and you go with it or you go under. The market demanded that I learn to decorate. I've done it, but it's not easy and it's time consuming.' (a potter)

'I identified a demand for one-offs . . . jardinieres . . . following the fashion for arts and crafts Victoriana. I also produce a range of bright colours with Mediterranean influences following the Italian fashion.' (a potter)

Design education

144. Almost half raised the problem of selling craft to a general public who were ill-informed. This lack of understanding of the nature and value of craft work was said to give rise to particular problems, the most significant of which was the unwillingness of customers to pay realistic prices for craft work.

'Some little old lady says . . . "£80 for a knitted cardigan!" What she doesn't realise is that it's a woven coat that's taken maybe seventy hours to make and £20 in materials and it still only costs £80!' (a weaver)

'I'm irritated by the attitude of the public who see a craftsperson as just doing it because they want to do it, and therefore expects it to be offered on the cheap.' (a potter)

145. In addition, the inability of the general public to discern the differences between hand-crafted and mass-produced items, and between high- and low-quality work, was said to encourage fierce competition from machine-made products and from amateur hobbyists. In the latter case, prices could be charged which were below proper commercial rates. It was argued that this practice (particularly prevalent in craft markets) tended artificially to suppress price levels for commercial craft concerns.

'If only people would realise that the deal they're getting from X is very shoddy. It has to be because everyone has made their little bit out of it. Craftspeople have to undercharge to compete with things of a lesser standard in the shops.' (a furniture maker)

Craft ideology

Autonomy

146. It appeared that many of those interviewed were willing to forgo a high salary for the sake of autonomy. There were instances of career changes into craft, from such diverse backgrounds as civil engineering, factory management, and education. Autonomy was the most frequently cited reason for a career change.

'I like being a craftsperson because I am in control. You can do things the way you want to do them and control the amount of money you earn . . . You're not being pushed along by the system all the time.' (a leatherworker)

'I could do a management job, but I value independence highly . . . We earn enough to do all we need to.' (a potter)

Creativity and the pursuit of excellence

147. Some interviewees who regarded themselves as 'artist-craftsperson'/'designer-craftsperson' or 'designer-maker' regarded their work in craft as primarily a pursuit of technical and aesthetic excellence. In this sense their 'products' were a by-product of experiment in a creative process.

'I want to be ranked amongst the top glass blowers in the world . . . That's my aim.' (a glassmaker)

'If I can't make them to the best of my ability, then I don't want to make them at all.' (a basket maker)

'When you are working in craft you do get a bit wrapped up. It's all more to do with ideas and realising them in three dimensions.' (a potter)

'I have to make them. I get very irritable and upset if I can't work . . . I don't do it as a process, I'm interested in the image and in the meanings that it has.' (a tapestry weaver)

'Every potter is after the perfect pot which he knows he's not going to get. If I like something, no amount of money can satisfy me to part with it. If I don't . . . I'd rather give them away.' (a potter)

'I always feel very sad when my pots go and I've got in exchange a cheque, because the exchange doesn't seem fair.' (a potter)

The clash of principles

148. In general the craftspeople regarded their work as items first imagined, then executed, then sold. Their policy appeared to be first make the product and then worry about selling it. One cited the example of two or three items which he knew would sell well, but refused to make for aesthetic reasons. This under-

lines the considerable barrier for many in matching commercial opportunity to aesthetic principles.

> 'I want to achieve the highest possible quality. I have a firm prejudice against business but now I am running a business and I have met myself coming the other way.'
> (a furniture maker)

> 'We are rather honorary artistic individuals and just prefer to do what we want. I didn't to be honest look at a sound way of going about setting up a business.' (a potter)

> 'It's a struggle to balance commercial aspects and artistic aspects.' (a glassmaker)

> 'All the time you come up against this terrible barrier of reluctance to confront the commercial world. Craftspeople seem to want to escape it and there is no escaping it if you have to pay the bills.' (a potter)

Reconciling craft and business

149. A minority saw no real difficulty in reconciling working in craft and running a business. It was, however, very evident that a number of those who had taken an art, craft or design training by full-time attendance at colleges of art and design had significant difficulties in combining both activities. In addition, a number of those who had left jobs in industry to pursue craft work appeared hesitant to embrace commercial principles in their craft businesses. For this group, running a craft business appeared to be part of a deliberate total lifestyle, where quality of life and rural living were given precedence over monetary goals. Despite this, there were a number of interviewees who saw no ideological barriers.

> 'I see no problem in reconciling making and a business ethic. I think this is a dichotomy instilled through the English art education system.' (a porcelain maker)

> 'There's no conflict in being a craftsperson and running a business . . . only in the sense that you're never going to make money working in crafts, not unless you become famous or see your work regarded as "Art".'
> (a basket maker)

> 'It's not enough to sit in a studio and make beautiful stuff. I know people who have gone under either because they didn't have enough business sense, or because they didn't market it properly.' (a glassmaker)

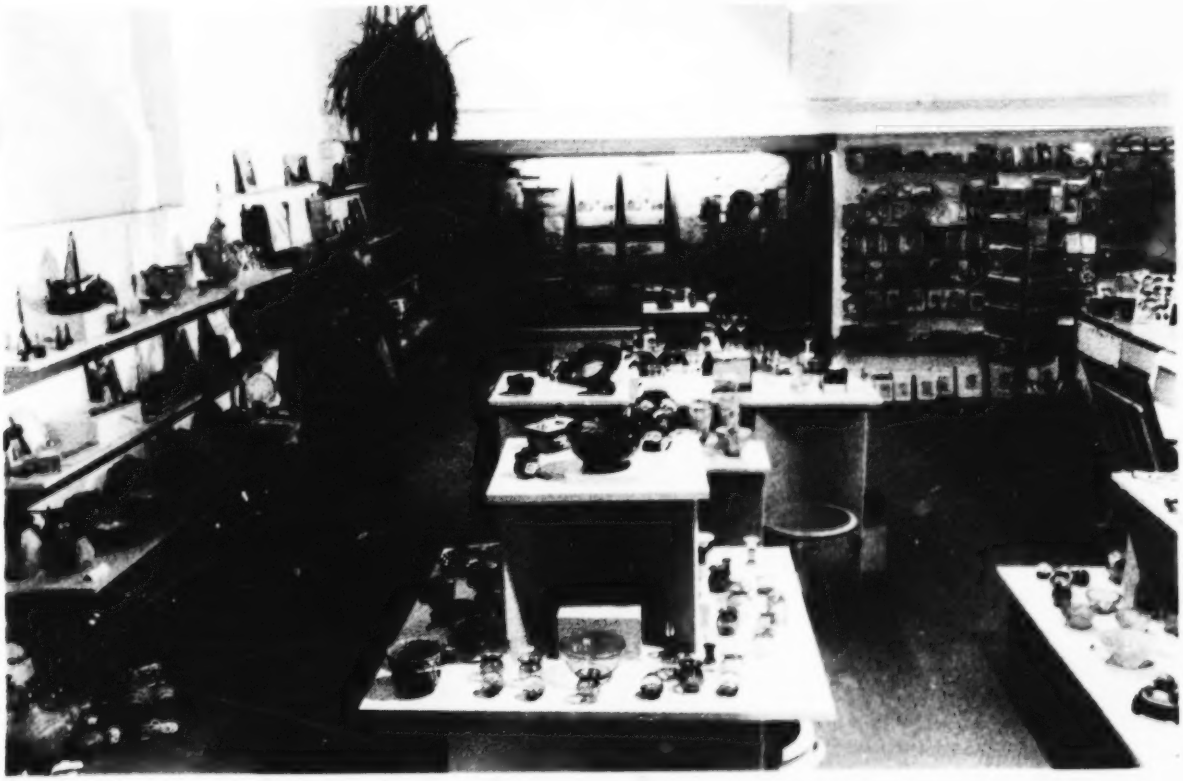
> 'If you had asked me two years ago what sort of business I was in, I would have said I'm in the business of making and selling pots . . . I think now I'm in the gift trade however much I don't want to admit it.' (a potter)

> 'I am attracted to the business side. I've never seen a clash of interest between making and running a business. Both are equally creative.' (a potter)

'Nearly all craftspeople that I know are very good at their craft and very bad at running a business. It's essential that if somebody is going to run a craft business they should be made to understand from the outset that it is a craft business and they cannot afford to neglect the second of the two words. They make craft and they don't know how to sell it, how to cost it, how to look after their secondary expenses, budget for them, plan, do cash flow analyses and all the rest.' (a weaver)

Marketing awareness

150. There was evidence that a number felt a growing need for, and interest in, marketing skills. In addition, a handful had either used professional public relations consultants to advise them on promotional matters or were considering doing so in the near future. The major barrier was expense.



The shop at Cirencester workshops

'If you're making things that people can't find a context for . . . it doesn't matter how good it is . . . you won't sell it.' (a potter)

'I'm quite converted to the benefits of marketing training and it ought to start in the colleges.' (a potter)

'In the first three months of 1985, I hardly sold anything. The galleries weren't buying . . . we needed different customers, so I changed. I will make "lines" even tableware or souvenirs if I have to . . . I'm very interested in marketing in all sorts of ways.' (a glassmaker)

6. THE AGENCIES' PERSPECTIVE

151. During the course of the project, contact was made with a number of agencies concerned with the promotion of small businesses and craft enterprises. A resumé of findings follows.

BRAVE (the Bristol and Avon Enterprise Agency)

152. BRAVE is one of a number of local enterprise agencies which operate in the South West and which, together with the Small Firms Service, provides help and assistance to small businesses. It is active in helping small craft businesses in the Bristol and Avon area and has initiated an annual craft fair, held at the Watershed, Bristol. Recently the organisation has been involved in considering the exporting problems of small businesses. It has suggested that it would be beneficial for small business clubs to be set up for craftspeople in the Avon area.

153. Leaflets are produced which are intended to assist start-up businesses with ideas on product planning, and how to prepare business and marketing plans. BRAVE also offers a consultancy service.

CoSIRA (The Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas)

154. CoSIRA is organised on a county basis, each with its own adviser. Contact was made with two county offices in the South West and with the Head of the Sales Promotion Unit at the Headquarters in Salisbury, Wiltshire. The Bristol CoSIRA office also has links with the Small Firms Marketing Centre of the New Work Trust in Avon and has run day schools in conjunction with them.

155. CoSIRA's Sales Promotion Unit actively encourages small craft businesses by renting exhibition space on their behalf at various trade and gift fairs throughout the UK. These include the British Craft Trade Fair (BCTF) and the Harrogate Gift Fair, which has a specific section for crafts. These fairs have been in existence for 7 and 18 years respectively. The client businesses take space at these fairs backed by CoSIRA's professional expertise.

156. CoSIRA regards client attendance at the Harrogate Craft Fair as a marketing training ground — 'an opportunity to show craftspeople the broader process of selling' — and an entirely different context to the public craft fair, with which many are already familiar. Each year a dozen or so firms exhibit at the BCTF under their auspices. They are encouraged to attend for three consecutive years so that exhibitors become more aware of market trends and have the opportunity of reinforcing their knowledge and expertise. It also presents a dependable image to the potential buyer. As confidence grows, the businesses are encouraged to exhibit at the Harrogate Gift Fair (in 1986 CoSIRA took 20 firms there). Ultimately, experienced and confident craftspeople are encouraged to exhibit independently at a 'premier' gift fair, the Spring Fair at Birmingham's NEC.

157. Although many buyers are looking for business with large firms, it is estimated by CoSIRA that around ten per cent of trade buyers will place orders with small craft businesses if their image is sufficiently professional. Buyers tend to be either small independent retailers buying British made craft or representatives of larger organisations 'looking for novelty'.

158. CoSIRA representatives were asked to give their opinions on the major problems faced by the small craft businesses in their geographical area. The key problems cited reinforced the research findings. In addition the problem of poor package design was raised, with reference in particular to retailers' needs. It was suggested that it is the retail outlet which defines the 'product' and not the product itself. Therefore, distribution is seen as a key problem.

159. CoSIRA's brief is to represent organisations in rural areas (defined as those with under 10,000 population) who employ up to 20 skilled workers. Despite this it was stated that the vast majority of CoSIRA's clients were one- or two-man bands. It is this size of enterprise in particular that suffers the difficulties of production 'ceilings'.

160. Although the average size of current client businesses was said to be only 2.4 employees, interview findings show that this is not the generally held view. Many of those interviewed perceived the organisation as being interested only in much larger companies. In addition, the upper limit of 10,000 population meant that businesses located where there was a larger potential purchasing catchment area were unable to request help.

The Crafts Council

Activities

161. The Crafts Council makes grants and loans available to craftworkers when they start their careers and offers special project grants for more experienced craftworkers wanting to take time to explore new directions and new media. These grants are competitive and open to craftspeople from all regions. Unfortunately, restricted funds mean that competition is always fierce and many are consequently disappointed. A selected slide index of craftspeople's work is on open access at the headquarters at Waterloo Place, London.

Publications

162. A variety of publications is available through its own publications department. These range from reference books dealing with the problems of setting up a business to the official magazine *Crafts*, which is used by many craftspeople as a constant source of reference for its recommended gallery and shop listings and small ads. as well as for its regular articles on leading contemporary craftspeople.

Marketing

163. The Crafts Council employs a full-time marketing officer, whose work includes organising group exhibitions of craft work at galleries and trade fairs both in the UK and overseas. Lists are prepared and circulated giving details of these fairs. In addition, there is a commitment to basic training in marketing and selling by means of one-day study sessions. These are offered to craftspeople around the country using a touring team of Crafts Council speakers backed up by additional input from local

specialists. These sessions are highly valued by some craftspeople but many feel they are too infrequent in the South West. Unfortunately, the Crafts Council is a highly underfunded national body and as the South West region has a particularly high concentration of craft businesses, the problem of lack of available finance and resources is particularly acute.

FACE (Facility for Arts and Crafts Enterprise Ltd.), Glastonbury, Somerset

Aims

164. FACE, which receives financial backing from the Manpower Services Commission, offers practical and business training in the crafts for school-leavers by means of workshop placements with handskill businesses in the South West who act as 'sponsors'. FACE also has a retail outlet at Glastonbury for the sale of work by the sponsors and their trainees. FACE is committed to developing an awareness amongst its trainees of small business practice and skills, which include marketing, selling and design.

Database

165. The installation of computer facilities to help with administration, has encouraged the building up of a sizeable data bank on small craft businesses in the region.

Training

166. Training is offered by the sponsor at the placement premises and by FACE tutors at the Glastonbury headquarters who handle 'off the job' training.

167. The organisation has grown rapidly and looks set to continue its expansion policy subject to available funding. It is consolidating its present interests and hoping to initiate new projects related to craft business, where potential skills and training needs have been identified.

Guilds and associations

The role of craft guilds

168. Throughout the South West a dozen guilds provide support systems of various types to craftworkers. Activities vary, but in general they appear to function mainly as forums for the discussion of technical problems and as organisers of the annual exhibition of guild members' work. This has been the traditional role of craft guilds.

Guild membership

169. Many guilds are largely supported in their membership by part-time craftspeople who are not dependent upon craft skills for their sole income. However, some guilds have a substantial number of members who are totally reliant upon their income from craft. (One instance of 40% of membership was cited.)

Marketing and guilds

170. Although some guilds are voicing a growing concern about the problems their members are experiencing in selling their work, there appears to have been little positive action so far in confronting rigorously the problems of marketing craft. There have, however, been some recent instances of a more systematic appraisal of the buying public and the need for promotional and marketing skills.

171. The Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen commissioned a report on the future role and structure of their Guild, funded by the Sainsbury Trust. The findings were presented in Autumn 1985. They included an evaluation of the Guild's image, its long-term goals, its future promotional activities, and an attitude sur-

vey amongst members towards the Guild's role in marketing members' work. This points to an awakening interest in the need for marketing skills.

172. Two guilds in the South West are involved in new promotional schemes. Both have recently opened new premises which will house exhibition areas and guild shops. These are The Devon Guild of Craftsmen who are developing the Riverside Mill at Bovey Tracey, and The Dorset Craft Guild, with their new premises at Walford Mill, Wimborne, Dorset. The Dorset Guild has also been active in considering the possibility of exhibitions abroad. These initiatives are intended to compensate, to a degree, for the relatively few quality exhibition facilities available in the South West.

173. The Devon Guild purchased the Riverside Mill and is developing it with the support of Guild members, the Crafts Council and South West Arts. Their permanent site offers exhibition space, shop facility and a cafeteria. There is also an information bank on Guild members which gives details of their location and services and provides a photographic record of members' work. The Guild is also attempting to spread knowledge of craft techniques amongst the general public by means of exhibitions, regular seminars and lectures given by resident and visiting specialists. In addition, work is underway to develop a craft museum and archive room. This is an exciting development and a practical attempt to market the Guild more successfully.

South West Arts
Craft involvement

174. South West Arts appointed a member of staff with special responsibility for crafts (Visual Arts and Crafts Officer) in 1982. It has a strong involvement in the crafts, offering project awards and fellowships in craft which are competitive and aimed at allowing professional craftworkers to take time away from producing in order to rethink designs, purchase new equipment or travel for work purposes. The South West Arts Newsletter is mailed to approximately 200 craftspeople in the region and includes notices of potential awards, exhibitions, an opportunities and contacts column, and news on galleries. There is also an exhibition space and a slide index at the headquarters in Exeter. The index is there to help promote the work of selected professional craftspeople in the South West and is available for consultation by prior appointment. It is intended to act as a reference point for gallery directors, individuals or groups organising exhibitions, architects seeking work for commission or companies wishing to purchase work for offices.

175. South West Arts is committed to helping professional craftspeople in the area and it provides an important reference point and source of expertise for professional craftspeople. However, severe lack of funding and limited staffing necessarily constrains its wider potential.

176. In the publication *A Survey of the Arts in the South West* (1984), it was recognised that 'much marketing work on behalf of the crafts and craft exhibitions is thin, unimaginative and untargeted . . .' and that 'professional marketing advice would be necessary to create a sustaining audience from a broad base'.

177. Comments in the report concerning the training of craftworkers included the following:

> 'Tutors and students said they needed further information on working opportunities, on organisations who could help them, and advice from practising craftworkers on running a business . . . The training of craftworkers in formal education is all to do with techniques and the aesthetics of making crafts, and nothing to do with its presentation, marketing and finance. Craftworkers are as badly trained as most other artists in the business of their profession.'

178. South West Arts recognises a pressing need amongst craftworkers for assistance with marketing, in particular on ways of thinking creatively about marketing work beyond the conventional outlets. The organisation has recently made a specific award to a craftsperson to enable them to further develop their marketing skills.

7. THE BUYERS' PERSPECTIVE

179. Throughout the research, a number of visits were made to local, regional and national craft fairs. In addition, where possible, craft gallery and craft shop proprietors were interviewed and asked to offer their views on the problems of marketing craft work.

Craft shops and craft galleries

180. During conversations with craft shop and craft gallery proprietors a number of recurrent criticisms were raised about the business practice of craftspeople. These can be summarised as follows:

- lack of adequate product information
- no firm guarantee of delivery dates
- lack of consistency in products
- price changes without prior notification
- incomplete orders with additional unrequested items making up the shortfall
- late deliveries
- general unreliability
- general lack of awareness of the craft buyers' requirements

181. In addition, a number of gallery owners commented upon the unprofessional image offered by craftspeople, many of whom had made a first approach to their gallery or shop with no prior written notice or even a preceding introductory telephone call. Such practice could interfere with the gallery's own schedule, many preferring to organise their week to include specific days for purchasing and looking at new work. Despite these criticisms, gallery owners still preferred to deal direct with the maker rather than purchase work through an agent. Many agents were considered to have insufficient specialist craft knowledge.

Craft fairs and trade fairs

182. These varied considerably in scope and intent, and ranged from one-day sales by small groups of craftsmen exhibiting their work on covered trestle tables in village halls, to the costly and professional trade fairs such as the British Craft Trade Fair and the Harrogate Gift Fair.

The Harrogate Gift Fair

183. This is one of the largest gift fairs in the UK, offering exhibition space for over 1000 exhibitors. 'Gift' is defined in the broadest sense and therefore craft products represent only a small proportion of the products exhibited. Despite this, a number of craft businesses took exhibition space within the sixteen separate venues scattered around the town.

184. One specific area was given over to craft exhibits. This was the Crafts Centre and numbered 42 exhibitors. Products were varied, ranging through pottery, toys, knitwear, jewellery and wood turning. Exhibition space was hired through the agency of the Rural Crafts Association. At a separate venue, a number of craftspeople were also exhibiting under the banner of CoSIRA.

185. Some of the exhibitors operating craft businesses in the South West confirmed the value of such trade fairs. One (a toymaker) commented that the fair provided a great deal of his annual business. In some cases direct orders were placed at the time, in other instances it provided potential customer interest which was often confirmed by follow-up orders after the fair. It also became obvious that the Harrogate Gift Fair was a regular point in the year where buyers and makers could meet and re-affirm commercial relationships. It was usually a source of repeat business and an opportunity for the display of new product ideas with the welcome corollary of buyer feedback on new products.

186. The Gift Fair is attended by foreign and British buyers, buying for a wide variety of retail outlets including galleries and department stores. The atmosphere is highly professional, despite its apparent relaxed air, and although a few artist craftspeople were in evidence, the majority of exhibitors appeared to be involved in quantity production and many were wholesalers or agencies.

187. If a small craft business were to exhibit there, it would be crucial to have:

(a) a well-designed exhibition space, with good graphic and product display;

(b) to carry up-to-date promotional material of high quality (it would not be sufficient to offer a leaflet with line drawings when the product to be promoted depended for its attraction upon subtle colour and distinctive surface texture);

(c) to be ready and willing to give accurate and reliable information on aspects such as pricing policy, delivery dates and the possibility of quantity orders.

188. The Gift Fair was definitely not a venue for the timid and unprofessional. Comments made by some of the interviewees have shown that trade fairs such as this can have a disastrous financial and psychological impact upon those who are unprepared or inexperienced.

The British Crafts Trade Fair (Harrogate)

189. This annual fair, for trade buyers only, runs for three days in May. It is geared specifically to craft, although a small number of exhibitors appeared at both the Gift and Craft Trade Fairs. With a total of over 450 exhibitors, the organisers claim that the British Craft Fair is the largest in the UK.

190. Again the organiser's definition of 'craft' is wide. In addition to more obvious areas such as batik, furniture, glass,

jewellery, leatherware, pottery and ceramics, toys and games and woodware, there are also soft furnishings, stationery and cards, corn-dollies, herb products, buttons and photograph frames.

191. Attendance at this fair was seen as a considerable commitment for the crafts businesses involved. Thirty-five small craft businesses represented the South West at the 1986 show. Many had travelled long distances and had made a considerable financial commitment to be there. For a number of exhibitors, it appeared that the financial commitment of renting an exhibition space had left little available monies for expenditure on appropriate graphic display or stands.

192. As a disinterested observer, the researcher was painfully aware of a vast difference in the professional image of many of the exhibitors. There was a distinct element of the amateur exhibitor here, which was to be markedly absent from the Gift Fair. Some experienced and highly 'professional' exhibitors remarked on this element, feeling that it detracted from the professional image of a trade fair. Some suggested that serious trade buyers would lose confidence in the fair should this 'amateur' element persist. This view was reinforced by a trade buyer who offered the following advice to exhibitors:

> 'The problem with small craft businesses is that they fall down with their image. Don't bring in a thermos flask! This is real death to any possible commercial interest.'

193. In general, exhibitors felt that numbers of trade visitors were lower than in previous years. The researcher spoke with a number of trade buyers who made the following points:

i) That a balance between various crafts was being disrupted by an over-preponderance of knitwear exhibitors. (Out of a total of 300 exhibitors over 80 were in the knitwear sector.) Some spoke of market saturation in the knitwear area.

ii) That although the British Crafts Trade Fair was a favourite amongst traditional gift shop buyers, the 1986 Fair lacked new ideas. A difficult trading climate had nudged makers into design conservatism.

iii) That 'craftspeople in general have a bad reputation for delivery and that's partly because of the problems they have in producing the work that's required of them. One potter given a quantity order would need something like 12 months to produce it. . . certainly, 3-4 weeks is an average delivery time for craft products'.

iv) That craftspeople must be aware of the different buying policies of various retail outlets. For instance, chain store outlets would not be at a craft fair but would be at the Harrogate Gift Fair; certain department stores buy centrally and others have autonomy. Some may buy centrally for some goods but buy individually for one-off departments. Particular retail groups have a

deliberate policy of paying within sixteen days to help small businesses.

v) That the price range of products is *crucial* to buyers.

vi) That craftspeople must begin to comprehend their versatility and their ability to 'customise' designs. It is these factors which give them such an advantage over the mass producer.

vii) That craftspeople need to get sorted out in the business sense. Items such as letterheaded paper and good packaging are essential. They should also appreciate that packaging should not be treated as an added cost but as added value.

8. THE MARKETING GAP

194. From the interview findings it is readily apparent that many small craft businesses are in need of some form of marketing help with their businesses. It appeared that existing marketing skills were at a low level in most cases. Although there was often evidence of attempts to deal with individual marketing problems, there was little understanding of the crucial interdependence of the various elements which together constitute a marketing strategy.

The product

195. In the majority of instances, craftspeople were highly production oriented, and this led to difficulties. The 'products' were in many cases of extremely high quality, but the corollary was an unwillingness to drop quality standards, even when the buying public could not perceive any differences. There was a general emphasis on pleasing the maker, rather than attempting to fill a customer need, therefore, in many cases the ideology of craft could be said to mitigate directly against commercial success.

Pricing

196. Pricing is an extremely difficult area where help is urgently needed. It is essential that pricing decisions should be made with a fuller understanding of the various methods available and of their respective strengths, weaknesses and comparative suitabilities. It is also necessary that this should be regarded as but one dependent variable in a total marketing plan.

Promotion

197. Promotion was a particularly weak aspect. Craftspeople often set extremely high personal standards and would tend, mistakenly, to apologise for their work when involved in personal selling. There was too little understanding that promotion means effective communication with all people, organisations or companies, who are present or potential customers. It was felt that there was a lack of consistency and of professionalism in the image presented to a sometimes necessarily diverse market. This tends to cause customer confusion, a situation which may well be reinforced by the overall lack of craft and design education amongst the general buying public.

Design education

198. The lack of design education amongst the general public was raised as a major hurdle by craftspeople, particularly with reference to pricing levels. This problem could perhaps be overcome to an extent if craftspeople were to increase their promotional skills and fill the 'knowledge gap' by more informative labelling and information back-up on craft techniques and skills and on using the object. What is at present seen as a major disadvantage could perhaps be turned to advantage by stressing the unique skills, design flexibility and personal service of craft work in comparison with standard mass-produced ware. Success in this area would require the substitution of positive customer perceptions for present lack of knowledge or misconceptions, a difficult but crucial promotional task.

Place of sale

199. There was, in general, a muddled view of the possible outlets for craft work and of their differing character and suitability. This situation tended to be aggravated by a number of factors:

- some craftspeople had difficulty in defining their own product and hence an appropriate market place;
- the craft market place itself suffers a confusion of labels ('craft market', 'craft shop', 'gift shop', 'craft gallery', etc.) which further compounds the problem;
- there was a noticeable lack of information amongst craftspeople regarding potential suitable outlets, a situation which was reinforced by working in isolation in many cases;
- there was a tendency also to rely on conventional listings (such as Crafts Council lists) which increased competition amongst the many for relatively few outlets.

200. Many, therefore, found it difficult to match their work to an appropriate selling context. The encouragement of some creative thinking about other possibilities would be useful practice.

David Winckley's work at the Vellow Pottery, Williton, Somerset

The marketing concept

201. The application of the marketing concept to a production-oriented rather than a customer-oriented business is difficult. However, whilst recognising that many craftspeople have entered business for the purpose of making rather than for gaining maximum profits, it could still be argued that some provision of marketing skills would alleviate the apparently dire financial straits of many.

202. A careful and considered training appropriate to a craftsperson's needs should offer a counterweight to the emphatic concentration on product without seeing it in context — its context being its price, its place of sale and its promotional backup.

203. It was obvious that many of those interviewed felt strongly the pressure of lack of time. The area to suffer was usually forward planning and strategic thinking, including the preparation of any form of business or marketing plan. There was little time for any form of marketing research and many felt ill-equipped to undertake this.

204. It is suggested that there is a real need for some form of help with marketing skills, if only to incline the craftsperson to take time off regularly, to take stock of the present state of the

business, and to consider 'where do I intend to go with my business?'. If nothing else, such training would encourage a more structured and analytical approach to marketing planning, and a logical framework within which to identify key issues and make informed decisions in the context of scarce resources and fierce competition.

9. THE MARKETING WORKSHOPS

Aims of workshops

205. During April 1986, four one-day workshops were held in Plymouth, Ilminster, Cheltenham and Bristol. These were entitled 'Marketing and Craftspeople', and were intended to serve a dual purpose: first to provide a forum for the discussion of marketing problems amongst groups of craftspeople, and second to provide an opportunity for the researchers to test some existing marketing curriculum material and to judge its suitability to craftspeople's needs.

206. All those people who had undertaken in-depth interviews for the project were circulated with details, and to that number were added a further 200 small craft enterprises that had shown a willingness to be interviewed by the project researchers. Numbers were deliberately restricted in order to encourage maximum input by workshop participants. (See Appendix 7.)

Structure of the workshops

207. The day was structured into a series of sessions where basic marketing concepts were first presented and then discussed by the group. Following a brief introduction to the project and its research findings, there followed a session on the marketing concept given by a senior lecturer in marketing from the Business Studies Department at Bristol Polytechnic. Then the key sessions of the day were presented as a series of questions to be addressed by the participants:

- How do I get information?
- What do people buy?
- What will they pay?
- How do I attract business?
- Where does business take place?

Workshop findings

208. Each participant was given a session appraisal sheet to complete on or after the study day. 66% of these appraisal sheets were returned for analysis. The participants were asked to comment on the relevance of the subject matter, the length of the sessions, and to offer suggestions for the improvement of future sessions. An analysis of responses to individual sessions is given below.

Analysis of returned workshop appraisal sheets

Q1. Was the subject matter relevant to your work?

Sessions:	Relevant	Not relevant	No response
1. Survey results	91%	–	9%
2. Marketing skills and craftspeople	72%	6%	22%
3. How do I get information?	69%	6%	25%
4. What do people buy?	66%	16%	18%
5. What will they pay?	81%	–	19%
6. How do I attract business?	69%	6%	25%
7. Where does business take place?	50%	16%	34%
8. Open discussion	66%	3%	31%
9. Where do we go from here?	60%	–	40%

Q2. Could the session have been longer, shorter or was it about right?

Sessions:	Longer	Shorter	Right length	No response
1. Survey results	13%	6%	57%	24%
2. Marketing skills and craftspeople	13%	22%	25%	40%
3. How do I get information?	19%	–	25%	56%
4. What do people buy?	6%	3%	31%	60%
5. What will they pay?	13%	3%	34%	50%
6. How do I attract business?	19%	3%	28%	50%
7. Where does business take place?	9%	6%	25%	60%
8. Open discussion	31%	–	13%	56%
9. Where do we go from here?	25%	–	13%	62%

NOTE: 50 appraisal sheets distributed: 33 returned:
Response rate = 66%

General observations

209. Two general observations can be made:

- That most participants considered that the subject matter of the sessions was relevant to their work.
- That participants considered that the degree of relevance varied considerably between sessions.

210. For instance, over 80% of respondents considered that the session on pricing was relevant, whereas a smaller percentage (between 60% and 70%) thought that gathering 'information', the 'attraction of business' and 'what do people buy' were relevant to their experience. Notably only 50% considered that the session 'Where does business take place' was of relevance to them.

211. These findings reinforce the tendency of craftspeople to perceive marketing as selling an already created product without appreciating their craft work in the wider context of consumer demand and wholesale and retail distribution networks.

Specific points raised

212. A number of specific points were raised which are summarised below under their appropriate headings, with verbatim comments where appropriate.

Marketing theory
Formal presentation

213. Any formal presentation or discussion of theoretical aspects of marketing was considered inappropriate, irrelevant or antithetical to many of the craftspeople present.

'Much too much high-powered marketing theory/charts etc. almost totally irrelevant to my situation . . . It would have been more useful to look specifically into the five or so groupings of skills (present at the workshop) and discuss detailed ideas related to each in turn.'

'All the sessions were relevant to me in theory, but too many of the problems relate to one-man-band situations where one-offs are produced, for much of the theory to be practicable . . .'

'Craft is (technical) research . . . we have to sell whatever comes out of our research. Consequently market research and product planning have much less meaning for us . . . and a marketing plan may be irrelevant, except when we have to eat.'

'I think that the dichotomy between the terminology of marketing and the concerns of the craftspeople was clear.'

'Rather long and a bit inclined to jargon to which I am totally allergic.'

Visual aids

214. Overhead visual aids illustrating marketing concepts, such as the marketing mix, were generally received with suspicion or bewilderment, the apparent major problem being an inability or unwillingness to accept the business terminology used.

'Of your OHP diagrams . . . "The Marketing Process" and "Controllable and Uncontrollable Factors" meant very little . . . nor did "Market Segmentation" . . .'

215. They requested not abstract presentations of marketing models and concepts but hard practical *information* which would be immediately and directly relevant to their own commercial problems.

'A day of theory helps to bring us all back to sound commercial thinking but for people still considering starting, it might make life sound easier than it really is. I have spent many hours searching out rules and regulations on tax, NI, trading standards, design copyright, and insurance for the craftsperson . . .'

216. This did not, however, reflect an unwillingness to confront the issues themselves. It was therefore not so much a criticism of the content as of the form of the sessions. A number of the workshop participants felt that it would have been helpful to have received the textual and diagrammatic material in advance to allow a degree of familiarity with 'alien' terminology.

'Information on pricing methods, and marketing models were useful but best pre-absorbed . . .'

'Fact sheets could have been sent in advance leaving maximum time for questions and deeper elucidation . . .'

'It would have been helpful to have had the hand-outs before the sessions so that we were more familiar with the material before starting . . .'

The content presented

What do people buy?

217. The session on product decisions entitled 'What do people buy?' was well received. It seemed that many participants seldom confront systematically the problem of what products people buy and why.

'It would have been useful to locate actual examples of "products" that sell and those that don't and try to explain why . . .'

'This was very good. It made me look again at what I make and why . . .'

What will they pay

218. The session on pricing policy, entitled 'What will they pay?' was also found to be valuable and identified as one that demanded further time allocation. It was argued that ideally time should have been devoted to explaining in detail various pricing approaches and their relevance to particular trading situations.

'The workshop was extremely interesting and more than valuable — I have already put pricing into practice at more realistic levels without any adverse effect — quite the contrary!'

'Could you give a breakdown of the working week in detail showing numbers of hours worked, rent, rates, electricity, etc. to demonstrate a calculation of an hourly rate.'

'One area we could have spent all day on was pricing, and it might have been useful to have had more information on ways of working out cost-oriented pricing as everyone seems to find it a difficult area.'

219. It was suggested that pricing one-offs and pricing repeated work, required different approaches.

'There is a conflict here between one-off and repeated work . . . perhaps the two areas should have been dealt with separately? . . .'

The informality of sessions

220. The meeting of like minds amongst the craftspeople was regarded as one of the key benefits of the day. The opportunity to confront and share common problems and to discuss possible ways forward was seen as immensely valuable. It was noticeable that study breaks were used to build up new informal help networks.

'It was very useful to hear about other people's problems and ideas as professional craftspeople, and made me feel much less confused and apprehensive at the thought of tackling the same issues myself.'

'We learnt a great deal from other craftspeople there. I think that craftspeople would all benefit if we could manage to meet more often, both from increased knowledge and from boosted morale and decreased isolation . . .'

The content required

More specific focus

221. Pressure of time in a one-day workshop meant that insufficient time was spent on some problem areas and that curriculum material was, in part, too general in nature.

'I enjoyed the workshops and the great deal of useful information I picked up but the individual sessions could possibly have been expanded somewhat and have incorporated more detail.'

New areas

222. The participants suggested that further topics be incorporated into future workshop training sessions, and these included areas which were not specific to marketing, underlining the need for training in general business skills.

'The idea of an information booklet seems excellent. Topics might include how to raise capital, how to get a good accountant, how to use the small claims court, how to deal with suppliers of faulty materials, etc.'

'I would find a directory of information sources useful, e.g. addresses of organisations, advertising agencies, photographers, lists of magazines, accountants and other services specifically related to craftspeople.'

'I would like help on exporting. What help is available?'

'I would like to know others' experience of the small firms service, CoSIRA and the BOTB.'

223. A number of the participants were not familiar with the help offered by craft agencies or small business services in the South West.

'It was taken for granted that all participants were conversant with bodies able to assist e.g. CoSIRA, the Crafts Council, MSC, etc. It may prove helpful if a printed leaflet were made available.'

Areas to expand

Selling techniques

224. Selling was seen as an area of immense difficulty and a minority asked for one-day courses to be run on selling techniques. The majority regarded having to sell their work as an unavoidable but unfortunate necessity.

'A training session on "face-to-face" selling techniques would be useful.'

'I think skills in how to present and display your work to customers and gallery owners and shop owners should be gone into more.'

'I would like more coverage on various methods of selling.'

Promotional techniques

225. Promotion was identified as a particularly difficult area. More detail on different methods of advertising and promotion was required as well as specific help on the writing of successful copy and sources of information on the local availability of expert professional services, for instance graphic design and photography.

Distribution channels

226. Comments from those attending the workshops showed that there was considerable confusion regarding appropriate outlets for their work. Some training in methods of locating, analysing and assessing potential distribution outlets would seem to be invaluable.

> 'What about the conflict between galleries and craft markets? I still don't know where shops fit in if at all.'

> 'Craft markets are essential for some craft products. Ways of improving these would be good, to widen the gap between good crafts and charity bazaars.'

> 'I would have liked a longer discussion on alternative ways that the crafts could be marketed.'

> 'It would have been helpful if the many different sales outlets had been clearly defined.'

Tailoring courses

Special needs?

227. Many of the workshop participants perceived themselves as having very particular and different requirements to those of small businesses in general and, as a consequence, felt that they required tailor-made courses.

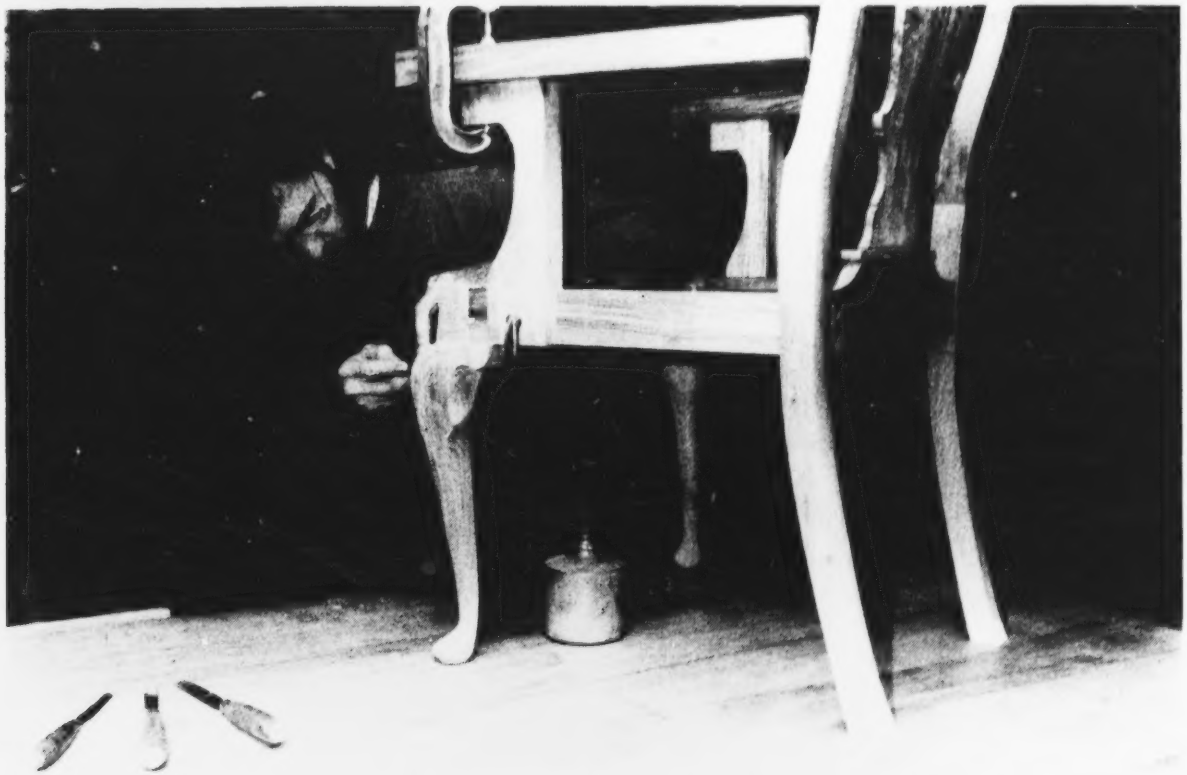
> 'A workshop geared to marketing in a general sense i.e. not specifically related to craft, was totally alien to what I am doing.'

> 'In general it was a useful day because I have had no formal marketing "education", however I did feel it was "marketing skills for business, watered down for craftspeople" rather than addressing the specific problems that being an artist-craftsman entails. I would appreciate specific advice/information/methods . . .'

> 'I feel strongly that the way forward from here is to try to formulate some business approaches relevant specifically to craftspeople. I know that people say that it doesn't matter if you're selling beer or buttons, the technique is basically the same — but I'm not convinced that the problems of running the business are the same and that perhaps needs exploring.'

> 'We need specific advice, but our problems are too varied to deal with in one session.'

> 'I felt it would have been more profitable if we looked a bit more at our particular problems as I think we all know what we *should* do but are not sure how, or what areas to concentrate on.'



Charles Anketell-Jones, furniture maker and designer

Course targeting
One-offs versus batch production?

228. There was a clear distinction between the marketing problems of those producing one-off pieces, and those working in batch production. It was suggested that two separate courses may be necessary to reflect this.

Single-medium courses

229. It was suggested that the marketing problems of craftspeople were made more diverse because of the variety of media, production methods, set-up costs, and distinctive markets for craftwork. It was proposed that future courses perhaps be run for groups of craftspeople working in a similar medium i.e. weavers, potters or glassmakers.

Learning methods
Learning by doing

230. Those who attended the workshops made it clear that the favoured learning approach was 'learning by doing' rather than 'learning by listening'. This was reaffirmed by the suggestion that a case study approach based on real experiences of craft businesses would be valuable.

> 'It would have been helpful to have used an example of a start-up business that had worked well, illustrating research undertaken, development, advertising, pricing, etc.'

> 'Examples of craft businesses that have succeeded and those that have failed would have been interesting . . . and an attempt to ascertain why.'

> 'A suggestion . . . a correspondence course on marketing for craftsmen, setting projects e.g. designing a promotional leaflet, and then giving positive criticism.'

Involvement of professional craftspeople

231. It was suggested that craftspeople in general would be more receptive to discussions of marketing concepts if sessions were jointly run by marketing specialists and those currently involved in running small craft businesses. Professional practitioners could present their own experiences and methods of problem solving. The logical conclusion to be drawn from such comments, was that those attending the workshops preferred to move from the particular to the general rather than be first confronted with general, theoretical material.

> 'I think there is a need for newcomers, students or others . . . to have some guidance from those who have already taken the plunge.'

> 'All participants could be asked to describe both their most successful and unsuccessful marketing strategies!'.

APPENDIX 1: SOURCES USED IN COMPILATION OF SAMPLE FRAME

Crafts Council Index (South West listings)

Crafts Council Register of Craftspeople (South West listings: all crafts)

South West Arts mailing list for 'professional' craftspeople

Major regional Guilds and Associations:

Guild of Gloucestershire Craftsmen
Dorset Craft Guild
Cornwall Crafts Association
Devon Guild of Craftsmen
The Craftsmen of Gloucestershire
Somerset Guild of Craftsmen

South West regional members of National Guilds and Associations:

Artist Enamellers
Art Workers Guild
Associations of British Craftsmen
Association of British Pewter Craftsmen
Association of Designer Leatherworkers
Basket Makers Association
British Artist Blacksmiths Association
British Artists in Glass
British Guild of Machine Knitters
British Leather Carvers Association
British Society of Master Glass Painters
Craftsmen Potters Association
Designer Bookbinders
Designer Jewellers Group
Guild of Architectural Ironmongers
Guild of Craft Enamellers
Guild of Luthiers and Pipemakers
Guild of Glass Engravers
Guild of Master Craftsmen
Master Carvers Association
Society of Designer Craftsmen
Society of Scribes and Illuminators
Society of Ornamental Turners
Wood Carvers Association

Local Guilds and Associations

Craft workshops in South West:

Bristol Crafts Centre, Avon
Wheelcraft Workshops, Chudleigh, Devon
Cirencester Workshops, Gloucestershire
Bickleigh Mill Craft Centre, Tiverton, Devon
Dean Heritage Museum Workshops, Gloucestershire

South West exhibitors in local fairs and national trade fairs:

Harrogate Gift Fair
Bath Craft Fair
British Craft Trade Fair, Harrogate
Local Instrument Makers Exhibition, Holburne Museum, Bath
Rural Crafts Association

APPENDIX 2: BREAKDOWN OF INTERVIEW SAMPLE BY SELECTION CRITERIA

a) **Breakdown by sex**

Male	24
Female	18
Husband/Wife Partnership	8

b) **Breakdown by county**

Gloucestershire	11
Devon	12
Avon	10
Cornwall	8
Dorset	4
Somerset	5

c) **Breakdown by length of time in business**

Less than one year	5
2–5 years	19
6–10 years	17
Over 10 years	9

d) **Breakdown of interview sample by craft-type**

Pottery/Ceramics: 13
(Pottery : 11, Ceramics: 2)

Textiles: 10
This category includes hand knitters, machine knitters, hand-loom machine textiles, hand-woven wallhangings, hand-printed silks.

Wood: 9
This category includes furniture makers, wood-turners and makers of small decorative wooden objects (mobiles, etc.)

Jewellery: 5
This category includes silver and gold jewellery, and jewellery of other substances, and small metal sculptures/decorative objects.

Toys and Musical Instruments: 6
This category includes makers of automata, wooden toys, and makers of musical instruments.

Leather: 3
Includes saddlery, handstitched fashion accessories, straps, belts, purses.

Glass: 2
Includes freeblown and moulded glass.

Graphics: 1

Rural: 1

e) **Breakdown by training**

Training in Art and Design	39
Business/Professional training (to degree standard)	4
No professional training	9

f) **Breakdown by age**

Under 25 years	2
25–35 years	28
36–45 years	16
46–60 years	6

g) **Breakdown by number of employees**

Proprietors only	35
Outworkers (one or more) (of which 7 in textile crafts)	8
Full-time employees (one or more) (in a variety of crafts, but usually in businesses six years old or more)	7

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE

Bristol Polytechnic

Department of Business Studies

Please PRINT details of your Name and Address in **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Thank you.

Your **Name**:..... (MQS/)

Name of BUSINESS ENTERPRISE: .....

1. **Business/Workshop Address**

.....

.....

.....

.....

Business

Telephone No.: .....

Home Address (if different from Business Address)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Home

Telephone No.: .....

2. **Description of Products**

a) Please specify **type** and **range** of products: .....

.....

.....

.....

b) From what **materials** are your products made?: .....

.....

.....

.....

3. **Production Techniques**

a) Are your products made ENTIRELY BY HAND? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) By machine only Yes ☐ or, c) using both hand and machine processes Yes ☐

4. Do you design and make these products yourself? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Are you engaged FULL-TIME in your **craft enterprise**? Yes ☐ No ☐

If NO, please indicate approximate hours per week. ☐ Hours

6. For how many years has your business been trading?

Please tick appropriate box.

☐	☐	☐	☐
Less than 1 year	2–5 yrs	6–10 yrs	Over 10 yrs

7. Was your business founded by yourself? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. How many employees do you have? Number .....

9. Do you use **Outworkers**? Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, how many? Please enter NUMBER in box ☐

10. Is your workshop situated in a complex of other craft workshops? Yes ☐ No ☐

11. **Training**
Have you undertaken any specific occupational training and/or professional craft/design training? Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES, please enter details of training with DATES.

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Do you have membership of a **Craft Guild or Association**? Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES, please give details .....

.....

.....

13. **Retailing**

a) Do you undertake commissions? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) Do you sell through retail outlets? Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES, please indicate retail outlets where work may be seen.

.....

.....

c) Do you sell direct to the public? Yes ☐ No ☐

d) Do you exhibit at Craft Fairs? Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES, please specify which Fairs, and dates: .....

.....

e) Do you produce publicity material? Yes ☐ No ☐

If YES, would you kindly include a copy with your returned questionnaire in the enclosed **reply paid** envelope.

14. It would be helpful if you would kindly indicate your age range by ticking one of the following boxes. Thank you.

☐ Under 25 yrs ☐ 25–35 yrs ☐ 36–45 yrs ☐ 46–60 yrs ☐ Over 60 yrs

Further involvement in research

This research project is intended to help craftspeople market their products more successfully.

Would you be prepared to take part in a further interview if necessary at your workshop/business premises?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you for sparing valuable time to help with this research project.

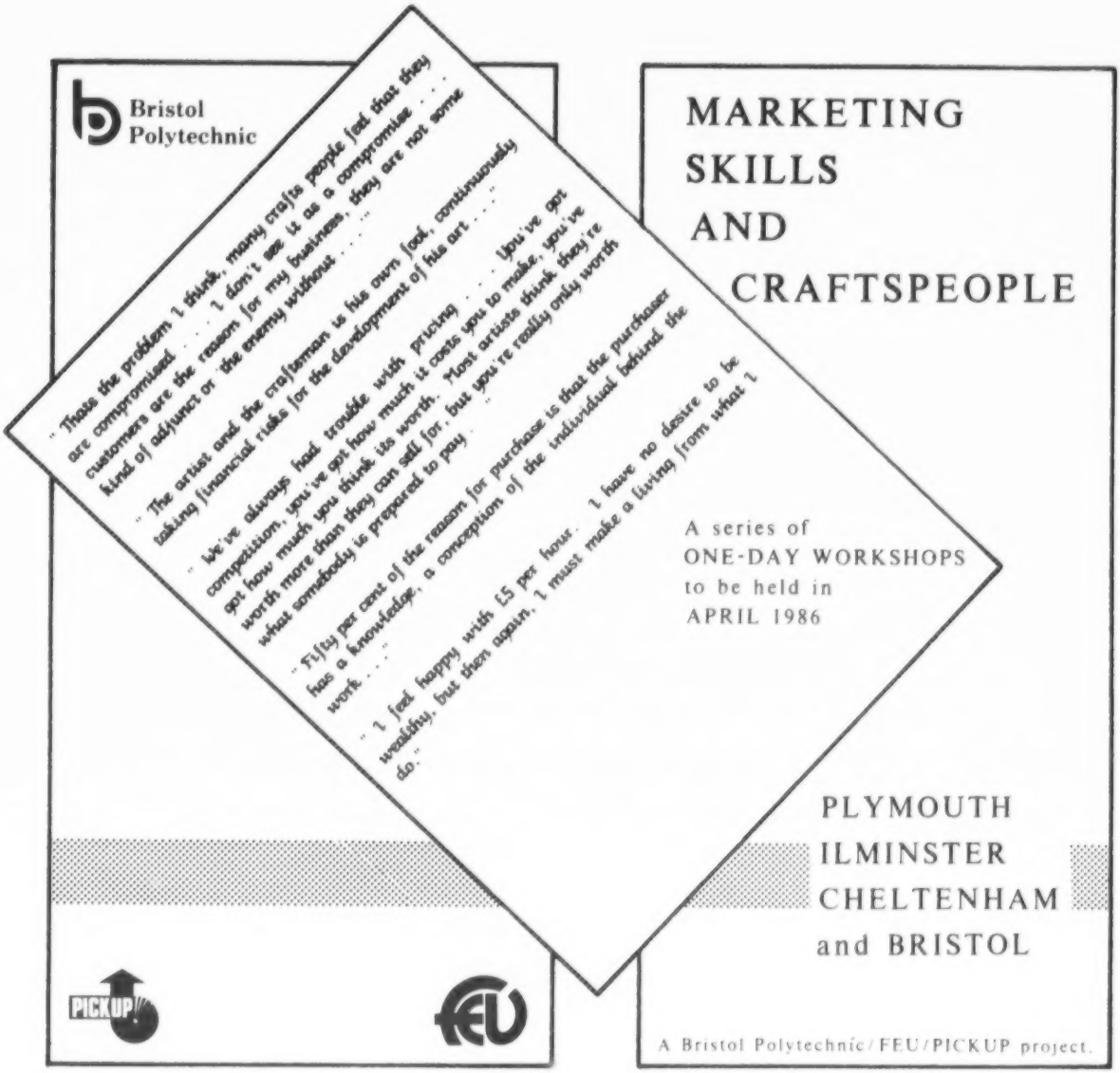
I would be grateful if you would return this questionnaire as soon as possible.

Anne Channon
Research Assistant
Department of Business Studies

APPENDIX 4: AREAS PROBED IN INTERVIEWS WITH CRAFTSPEOPLE

1. Training
2. Previous employment history
3. Relationship of training to craft business
4. Ideology
5. Attitudes to selling
6. Business history
7. Initial finance
8. Estimated hours per week
9. Training in business skills
10. Employees
11. Location of business
12. Product
13. Production capability
14. Attitude to repeats/long runs
15. Pricing
16. Promotion
17. Product distribution
18. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
19. Value of market research
20. Problems identified by craftsperson: past and present
21. Workshop participation

APPENDIX 5 (a): PUBLICITY MATERIAL


Bristol Polytechnic
"The artist and the craftsman is his own food, continuously taking financial risks for the development of his art . . ."
"We've always had trouble with pricing . . . You've got competition, you've got how much it costs you to make, you've got how much you think its worth. Most artists think they're worth more than they can sell for, but you're really only worth what somebody is prepared to pay . . ."
"Fifty per cent of the reason for purchase is that the purchaser has a knowledge, a conception of the individual behind the work . . ."
"I feel happy with £5 per hour. I have no desire to be wealthy, but then again, I must make a living from what I do."
MARKETING SKILLS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE
A series of ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS to be held in APRIL 1986
PLYMOUTH
ILMINSTER
CHELTENHAM
and BRISTOL
PICKUP
FEU
A Bristol Polytechnic/FEU/PICKUP project.

MARKETING SKILLS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE

ONE DAY WORKSHOPS

DATES	LOCATION
Wednesday 9th April	PLYMOUTH, Devon
Thursday 17th April	ILMINSTER, Somerset
Friday 18th April	CHELTENHAM, Gloucs
Friday 25th April	BRISTOL, Avon

Time

09.00 Coffee and Registration

09.30 – 17.00 Workshops

Fee: There will be a nominal charge of £2.50 per head towards the cost of lunch and refreshments.

Background

These workshops are an integral part of the **MARKETING FOR CRAFTSPEOPLE** project currently in progress at Bristol Polytechnic. It is intended that they should offer a forum for discussion of the business and marketing problems experienced by full-time professional craftspeople in the South West.

LINKS WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

It is hoped that these workshops will extend points of discussion raised in a series of semi-structured interviews held with craftspeople in 1985.

NUMBERS WILL BE LIMITED TO A MAXIMUM OF 20 PARTICIPANTS at each session to encourage free and critical discussion. Should the workshops be oversubscribed, it is intended to offer a further series later in 1986.

If you would like to attend please **complete the attached form** and return to the address at the top of the form.

What are the objectives of the workshop?

- **To define and discuss** the range of market-related problems that craftspeople face in running small craft businesses
- **To consider** the role and relevance of marketing skills for craftspeople
- **To explore** what form of marketing material could be both useful and relevant to professional craftspeople and small craft businesses

Learning methods

A number of introductory sessions will be given by the workshop tutors. These will explore those aspects of marketing identified as significant during research interviews.

It is planned to follow each talk by an open forum session where participants will be encouraged to discuss the issues raised.

Workshop Tutors

David Antoine, Senior Lecturer in Marketing

Anne Channon, Marketing Project, Research Assistant

For further information please contact: Anne Channon: Bristol (0272) 656261 ext 243/ (Dept. Business Studies) or 396

Please return accompanied by course fee to :

Anne Channon,
Dept. Business Studies,
Bristol Polytechnic,
Coldharbour Lane, Frenchay,
Bristol BS16 1QY

Course: **MARKETING SKILLS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE**

Dates: 9 April **Plymouth** ☐ A — 18 April **Cheltenham** ☐ C

17 April **Ilminster** ☐ B — 25 April **Bristol** ☐ D

Please indicate preferred venue by ticking appropriate box

Number of Participants .....

NAME OF PARTICIPANT/s

(please print)

Address:

Tel. No. **Day:** **Evening:**

Type of Craft

Course Fee (cheques should be made payable to Bristol Polytechnic) :**£2.50**

OR **Please tick box** if you require **Vegetarian** lunch ☐

or state special dietary needs .....

APPENDIX 5 (b): PROPOSED WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

9.00	Coffee
9.30	Welcome and introduction to Workshop Programme
9.45	Survey results — Mrs Anne Channon
10.30	Marketing skills and craftspeople
11.00	Coffee
11.15	How do I get information?
12.00	What do people buy?
1.00–2.00	Lunch
2.00	What will they pay?
2.45	How do I attract business?
3.30	Tea
3.45	Where does business take place?
4.15–4.45	Open discussion Questions and queries
4.45	Where do we go from here?
5.00	Close and summary of workshop

APPENDIX 6: WORKSHOP SESSION APPRAISAL SHEET

Bristol Polytechnic

Department of Business Studies

Sessions	Was the subject matter relevant to your work?	Could the session have been longer/shorter or was it about right?	Suggestions to *improve* the session on future courses
Survey results			
Marketing skills and craftspeople			
How do I get information?			
What do people buy?			
What will they pay?			
How do I attract business?			
Where does business take place?			
Open discussion questions and queries			
Where do we go from here?			

Additional comments, i.e. what additional coverage should the workshop contain?

APPENDIX 7: MARKETING WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

Number of craftspeople attending	AVON (Bristol) 13	DEVON (Plymouth) 15	SOMERSET (Ilminster) 11	GLOS. (Cheltenham) 11	TOTALS 50
Attendance by craft:					
Ceramics/potter	5	1	2	4	12
Knitwear	4	3	3	1	11
Furniture maker	2	1	–	–	3
Musical instrument maker	1	–	1	–	2
Leather	1	–	–	–	1
Weaver	–	1	1	1	3
Clay modeller	–	1	–	–	1
Jeweller	–	1	–	1	2
Toymaker	–	2	–	–	2
Wood	–	3	–	–	3
Pressed flower cards	–	1	–	–	1
Textiles	–	1	2	–	3
Chair-caning	–	–	1	–	1
Printed textiles	–	–	1	2	3
Basketry	–	–	–	1	1
Bookbinder	–	–	–	1	1
					TOTAL 50

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This carries regular information items on exhibitions and competitions, opportunities and contacts, gallery information and space and equipment for rent and sale. Editor: Sarah Scott, South West Arts, Bradninch Place, Gandy Street, Exeter EX4 3LS.

N.B. *Crafts Magazine* also carries letters from contributors on the subject of marketing and a regular column by the Crafts Council marketing officer, Morris Latham.

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b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvements can be effected;
c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
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